

Speaker: Stefan Duerksen, Lead Pastor

PRAY FOR OFFERING

Church-Wide Prayer: 5. Bird River Bible Camp – Forest fires

- PRAY for rain – for fires to be completely extinguished
- PRAISE the Lord - for saving the camp! Still standing! Trees, buildings, and grass
- PRAISE God for unifying so many believers in prayer over these fires! And for answering!
- Pray for the family that lost their parents to the fire.
- PRAY for campers going to camp – for God to do a deep work within their lives!
- PRAY for God to unify the Church in love for Him & Mission
- PRAY woman retreat – pivot & plan! Pray for all those going!

Intro: House on FIRE – imagine walking down the street and seeing fire coming from the roof of a house... then you look at the windows and you see a family sitting at a dinner table... unaware of the fire above their heads.

- What is the right thing to do? What is loving? GET THEIR ATTENTION AT ALL COSTS.

SERMON: Letters to the Church

Jesus gives each of these churches a REPORT CARD – He encourages – He warns – He does not pull any punches. THIS IS LOVE.

A. Letter to Thyatira - Encouragement & Warning Against Sexual Sin

Revelation 2:18–29 (ESV) ¹⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. ¹⁹ “ ‘I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. ²⁰ But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. ²² Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, ²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. ²⁴ But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. ²⁵ Only hold fast what you have until I come. ²⁶ The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ And I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

The Sandwich Method: (Good, bad, correct, hopeful future)

- Encouragement: Good works, love, faith, service, endurance & direction
- Correction: practicing sexual immorality & idolatry
- Warning: REPENT – or you will suffer judgement & it will affect your kids
- Encouragement: Hold fast! I am coming! I will reward you!

PAUSE: Should we talk about such things in church?

Scripture was read aloud in synagogues & churches. We are instructed to preach the FULL counsel of Scripture. The A, B, Cs – YES! AND the warnings regarding sin & judgement!

Did you know that the Bible warns about sexual immorality roughly 120 times?

The culture is on fire – the Church is on fire – sexual immorality threatens all of us

- OT – BIG 3: Sexual immorality, idolatry, child sacrifice
- NT – half of the letters give explicit warnings RE: sexual immorality
- Jesus warned two churches that their lampstands would be removed & of judgment
- Our culture is actively trying to educate our kids

For example: Dr. Debra Soh Ontario— sexologist, former writer for Playboy magazine, scientist. (You ever think I'd be quoting her? I do NOT agree with her on many things But she is on point in this.) Says "Children are being recruited as pawns to promote a manner of thinking that serves only adults. Parents can no longer trust that their child's school will teach them a curriculum based on facts. Over the years, I've received countless screenshots of guidelines and class handouts from concerned parents, caregivers, and teachers themselves. I question whether other parents realize this is happening, or worse, that they do, but don't care."

BROKEN SEXUALITY LEADS TO: broken families, kids, adults, sex industry, sex slavery, STDs, anxiety, depression, addiction, pornography, adultery... BROKEN SEXUALITY HURTS & KILLS PEOPLE.

1 Corinthians 6:18 (NIV) ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.

A. Holy Sexuality: What the Bible says about Sex & Sexuality

"Sexual immorality" Porneia – MEANING: "SEX outside of marriage" PRIMARY. Fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, sex with close relatives,

<https://www.neverthirsty.org/bible-qa/qa-archives/question/what-is-meaning-of-greek-word-porneia-in-bible/>

1. Sex is GOOD. Sex is for MARRIAGE between one man & one woman. (Gen 2:24-25; Eph 5:31-32)
2. Marriage pictures the relationship Jesus has with the Church (SEE God's Grand Story pt 19)
3. Sex creates ONENESS – physically, emotionally, & spiritually (1 Cor 6:13-20; Mal 2:13-16, Mt 19:4)
4. Sex before/outside of marriage is always sin.

Numbers 25:1 (NIV) ¹ While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women,

- This is the sin that incurred judgement! Pre-marital sex.

1 Samuel 2:22 (ESV) ²² Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

1 Corinthians 7:1–5 (ESV) ² But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. ³ The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband..

1 Corinthians 7:8–9 (NIV) ⁸ Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. ⁹ But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

- **FEW THINGS:** 1) singleness is GOOD; 2) Controlling your desires is the goal (inside or outside marriage); 3) Sex is ONLY for marriage – better to MARRY than BURN with passion....

Deuteronomy 22:13–30 (ESV) SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE CONSIDERED A VIOLATION.

Hebrews 13:4 (NIV) ⁴ Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

5. No sex within marriage *can be* sin – PROCESS – if there has been infidelity or abuse

1 Corinthians 7:4–5 (ESV) ⁴ For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵ Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

- **CAVEAT: INTIMACY, ONENESS, & NEW LIFE are the benefits! What about abuse? Or unfaithfulness?**
- **PLEASE GET HELP – HEALING – FOR YOURSELF – YOUR SPOUSE – YOUR FAMILY**
- Sex is a BIG part of INTIMACY- INTIMACY creates oneness and brings LIFE into a marriage which brings life into a HOME and FAMILY and then trickles out from there.
- **POINT:** It's more than just FUN (casual sex – no such thing!) Which is why when there has been unfaithfulness or abuse – couples often struggle with intimacy afterwards.

6. Marriage requires Commitment – BUT – Commitment does not equal Marriage.

Matthew 1:18–19 (ESV) ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

1 Corinthians 7:36 (ESV) If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin.

- **Betrothal was the HIGHEST level of COMMITMENT before marriage – SEX NOT ALLOWED.**
- The idea that commitment equals marriage is a LIE. It is NOT biblical. Even the most committed type of relationship in the BIBLE – BETROTHAL – did not equal marriage.
- Marriage IS the only place acceptable for sex.

7. Sexual immorality includes “touch that ignites”

1 Corinthians 7:1–5 (ESV) ¹ Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

Matthew 8:15 (NIV) ¹⁵ He touched (hapto) her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

- **GREEK: Hapto** – means touch or lighting a fire – the context here: “touching that ignites”

- **Jesus touched the woman and it ignited healing in her! WOW! CONTEXT MATTERS.**
- Cultural lie: “EVERYTHING but sex is ok” Scripture does not agree. Sexual immorality included touching that ignites sexual desire.

8. Pornography, Lust & Crude talk are sin – sexual immorality begins in the heart

Matthew 5:27–30 (ESV) “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.

- **LUST is akin to adultery – fantasy – pornography – trashy TV shows – media – ALL that sparks LUST? JESUS says it’s a sin.**

Job 31:1 “I have made a covenant with my eyes. How then could I gaze upon a virgin?

Ephesians 5:3–4 (ESV) But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

- NOT EVEN A HINT of it! NONE. That is God's STANDARD.

9. Homosexuality, bestiality, & sex with close relatives are sins.

Scripture condemns all of these practices. Lev 18 demonstrates incest and bestiality

Romans 1:24–28 (ESV) ²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

B. GOOD NEWS – Jesus came to save us from ourselves & our sin!

The more sexually liberated our society has become, the more broken and fractured our society becomes! Sexual liberation has not improved our mental health or brokenness!

Young couples, who waited till they were married to have sex, were the HIGHEST % of staying together long term! Highest marital satisfaction! (OPPOSITE OF WHAT SOCIETY SAYS)

Purity promotes intimacy in marriage! Purity promotes intimacy with Jesus!

You are NOT a victim of your passions, desires!

1 Corinthians 7:37 (ESV) ³⁷ But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV) No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Amos 5:14 (NLT) Do what is good and run from evil so that you may live! Then the LORD God of Heaven’s Armies will be your helper, just as you have claimed.

Romans 5:8–9 (ESV) ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Romans 6:1–3 (ESV) ¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Romans 6:12 (ESV) ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

Thyatira – The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ And I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

PLEASE do not buy the cultures standard of sexuality and life! Are you in a sinful relationship? Are you stuck in addiction? Are you filled with shame?

- **STEFAN STORY: fluffy clouds and white sheet**

Maturity = Self-control of your passions & desires. You are not a victim.

- 1) **Practice** – What practices are you are setting up in your life? A - B – C --- Z!
- 2) **Repent** – Measure your heart against Scripture – are you living in purity?
- 3) **Steps** – what steps do you need to take? E.g. confess, Path to Freedom, counsellor, deal with trauma, be honest about your struggles, etc.
- 4) **MARRIED COUPLES:** Fight for purity, holiness, and intimacy in your marriage!

SPECIAL: Purify my heart

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9 AM and 11 AM

MARANATHA!! Come soon, Lord!

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SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2024

Cruise ship → → → → Battleship

1. **Life on Mission:** Churchwide commitment to "Each One, Reach One"
2. **Heart of Southland:** 500 people - Prayer Summit, Set Free! & Bible in a year
3. **Next Gen:** ❤️ Passion for Jesus, memorization & find identity in Christ
4. **Church Renewal:** Double funding, mentors & CRI Churches in Canada
5. **Persecuted Church & Israel:** Salvation, hope & perseverance - MARANATHA