

Radical #9
Radical Gender

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Questions:

1. Who gets to tell you who you are? (whether you know it or not, you have to wrestle with this daily!)
2. What holds your affection(s)? What is the object of your desire(s)? (The answer to this question may help you with the first question!)
3. A mind-blowing statement: Something you never knew: You have a body! This is brilliant! If you remember nothing else, remember this!

Why would I be saying these things? Today we are talking about gender: **Radical** Gender.

Every week we review what it looks like to follow Jesus:

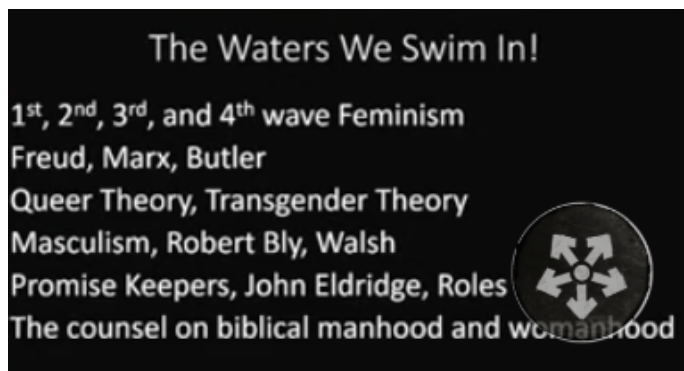
Luke 9:23

23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Last week when we talked about Radical Submission, you should have noticed that things are getting harder! If you are going to follow Jesus, everything is on the table, including your gender.

Gender is a hard word: it's getting more weird and complicated as time goes on. Some of you would say your gender is Male and Female. However, we need to get to the core of this and deal with it! We need to think about the questions above.

Let's start with the waters that we swim in: The items in the list below all contribute answers to "Who are you?" "What is the object of your affection?" and "You have a body."



1. 1-4th wave feminism: 1st wave is women getting the vote...4th wave is sex-positive deconstructionism: even if you haven't heard of this, it influences you.
2. Freud, Marx, Judith Butler helped form answers to your identity questions
3. Maybe you have read about Queer Theory and Transgender Theory: maybe you are in conflict about your body and your gender. Even if you haven't read about this, you are still influenced by these, whether you are aware of it or not.
4. Masculism, Robert Bly, Walsh documentary "What is a Woman?" All of these tell us who we are.
5. The Church too has a voice in telling us about the roles of women and men. Maybe you know about the council on biblical manhood and biblical womanhood. All of these affect you when you try to answer the above questions.

I am not making a judgment on the above list, although some are better than others. I want you to know that they are influencing how you answer the questions above.

I would love to just spend the next 5 hours lecturing on these things and then walk through Genesis and build a theology of gender. I feel, though, that I have a word that is just for the Village. Simplified, I want to start with what I think is one of the ***most radical statements in the NT on gender:***

Gal 3:26-28

26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,

The NIV is trying to be inclusive here: the actual word is **SONS** and refers to position in a family. The oldest son is most important in the early Christian family. All people in Christy hold the **SON** position.

27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

This is **not** radical because there is neither male or female: ***the radical part of this is that all of us who are baptized in Christ hold the position of sonship.*** This is saying that if we are sons, the person who tells us who we are is Jesus.

Being clothed in Christ removes the divisions; the object of our affection now is Jesus.

This is a radical passage about gender because the one who tells us who we are is Jesus, the primary object of our affection is **Jesus**, and there is ***only one gender***, Jesus.

I haven't said male and female genders have disappeared. I am saying that your gender is subject to Christ; it is not primary in understanding who you are. When you step into sonship and hold a favored position with God, you step into Christ. This is critical because we spend a lot of time in our culture trying to figure out who we are be as men and women and in our brokenness. But this passage says, "NO! It's about Jesus."

Today I want to talk about your **body**. A merciful loving God defines you: no matter what struggle you have, Christ is the thing that goes before you, not your gender.

Whoever created me gets to tell me who I am. This is important: I didn't create me, God gets to narrate who I am and Christ walks with me. We are created in His image.

Genesis 1:27

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God, he created them; male and female he created them.

After each day, we learn that creation is good. Then in vs. 27 it says God created mankind in his image. Image means icon or image: people who reflect or image him...we are actually God's living, breathing idols. We are the icons of God! This gives us dignity if we are the icon of the creator of the universe.

All the myths of how creation happens don't give humans dignity. At best, they are slaves to the gods. But in the Jewish story, the one Moses wrote inspired by the Holy Spirit, humans are God's special image, made alive by his Spirit. In Mose's narrative, the female is equal to the male: male and female image God together. This gives humans dignity.

God's image is reflected by either female or male: this is the complete reflection of God. Understand that your body physically, **inside and outside**, is the icon part: it's as important as the Spirit that makes it alive. Wherever I go as a man with my DNA, and you engage with me, you will experience God in a way that no one else can. This is the same for all of you! All the parts of your body are images of body.

Our bodies are important: they are the way we reflect God to the world. The problem is that once God created humans and gave them instructions, God has to go looking for them in Chapter 3 after Adam and Eve sinned. "I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." When we sin, we are fully aware of our bodies; our bodies are exposed! Adam and Eve were hiding their bodies: their image has been

damaged and violated holiness. God has to send them out of the garden as exiles: their **bodies** were exiled.

Physical human bodies get attacked by our culture. Our culture hyper focused on our bodies. Remember, our body is the icon of God, which is super important, and yet we are very uncomfortable with this. We don't like that our bodies reflect God as male and female.

I was thinking about this: **Jesus had a body**. How did he deal with his body? He spat, put his finger in someone's eyes. But two incidents stand out to me:

1. First,

Luke 7:36-38

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. **37** A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. **38** As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

Jesus is with a bunch of people and a prostitute comes in and puts perfume on his feet and kisses them. The Pharisees would not allow this to happen because a woman's hair was very sexual in Jewish history.

It's like if you find out that I have a terminal disease and one of the women here came up here and wiped my legs with her hair and kissed them. This is not normal! I want you to feel the awkwardness of bodies: **Jesus was comfortable** with this: with the sexuality of a woman doing this. He is not uncomfortable with her body or his. Think about this for a minute: she is wiping off the mud on his feet with her hair and he is OK with this.

2. Another example: Jesus tells his disciples that one would betray him:

John 13: 22-25

22 His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. **23** One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. **24** Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means." **25** Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

This was a short table and Jesus and his disciples were all close together, eating on their left side. What probably happened is that John laid his head on Jesus's stomach and asked the question. This is not physically normal to us but it was in this culture. Notice that Jesus had a body that he engaged with potentially awkward, intimate things with and he was OK with it.

The point is that your body is where God has his image and when people look at you as a woman and man, they are seeing God's image in all its grossness perhaps and comfortability. But when the fall came and there was sin, we became uncomfortable with our bodies and the enemy attacked our bodies. **The image of God in your body is under attack.**

There is room for grief because our bodies are in exile: things that have been said to us, ways our culture has said a man or woman is supposed to be. This is why I said there is one gender: there is great distinction in the genders and yet there is now.

The wounds hit your body. Part of responding to the challenge of owning your body as an image bearer requires grief: reflection of the wounds that have happened. We have been stereotyped, cast out, and feeling like we don't belong, wrestling with deteriorating bodies (aging bodies cannot do what they used to do as they age daily).

We must also offer gratitude for the way God uses us as his icon. We have the opportunities to heal others and offer good things to people in our bodies. No matter what happens, the body you have right now is an icon of God and you have an opportunity to be used as an icon of God.

Think about the body in this way: we walk into the world powered by the Holy Spirit in bodies that are male and female. Everything you do is feminine. There isn't no definition for this: it's what you do. As a man, everything you do and say is masculine. Even if you're not strong, does that mean you're not a man or masculine?

Gal 2:20 (KJV)

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Although there is a future resurrection, I live now by faith. You don't get to say who you are: You live by faith in the one who loved you and gave himself for you.

Questions:

Are pronouns *they* and *them* OK? Jesus was a man: our gender is subject to. He, she, they do not define us. If we struggle with our bodies, the invitation is that despite how difficult it is, I can be in Jesus and safe in the places where I wrestle. Jesus has given me a physical body that I need to learn to reflect him in.

What is the most loving way to interact with someone who is struggling with their gender? Only call them a male? We are to engage with others through kindness, not yelling at them or telling them what to do. I'm going to go out on a limb and say be generous to people and how they see themselves. And at the same time to be honest with ourselves. With children, we need to be very careful.

Also: I Peter 3 Always be ready to give an answer!

The Apostles Creed says there is a resurrection of the body: it's more than gender and sexuality and redeemable in the last days. How do we take care of our bodies health-wise: I think I Cor 6 says we are a temple where he dwells. But I think your maleness is so important in how you reflect Him. How you reflect Him in your gender is important.

I'm certain here we have a wide variety of viewpoints. How can we live in peace? What are the rules we play by on this topic? First, we anchor ourselves around a creed and around Jesus with a confidence that we are moving towards Jesus. This is the invitation: issues such as baptism or gender, we hold with an open hand and reflect each other's places as we wrestle with this.

In the Christian Living Class we are also talking about this: male is danger and strength and the female is vulnerable, beauty, and mystery. -I want to give push back on this a bit: those are not a necessity to reflect these to be a female. If I'm not dangerous or strong, am I not a man? These categories can tell us who we are and I want you to realize these are not all encompassing.

Ryan: I want to reflect back what I think I'm hearing and understanding: I'm getting the feeling that as Jesus defines gender and that we have the body that God gave us, that our expression of Jesus through our body defines our maleness or masculinity and it doesn't come from what I see on TV or ads or what others tell me, etc. The way I express myself in my authenticity is what my maleness is and it doesn't have to be the same as another male (also true for women). Is this right?

Our sexual ID isn't who I am, it gives me peace. Therefore I can accept and love someone but not necessarily approve of them.

It's hard to have a body that is aging and to know that it won't get better. But inwardly I'm being renewed: the power of Christ comes through in a different way.

This topic can tear people apart and I think we should grieve this when we are confronted with someone who differs from us. Be humble and merciful regarding this topic. This conversation requires that we cling to Christ first. [It's so easy to make this conversation shift to the gay movement or the transgender movement and those identities: but sometimes the noise gets so loud and we lose that we are all in the wrestling of figuring out who we are. It breaks families apart but it also breaks individuals apart. We are in exile and are being redeemed: Grieve and be grateful. You can hear about my own journey with this topic in previous sermons and podcasts.](#)