

Theology of Sex – Creation

By Mike Erre

Worship leader:

Will you guys stand up with us again as we worship together and sing the song, no other name?

[Worship band plays songs]

[Piano continues playing]

C.J.:

Would you bow your hearts with me. Father God, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, Lord, may our lives be a sweet sound to You, our God. God, thank You for everyone who's involved in this Torrey conference. Thank You for giving us breath, giving us life this morning, waking us up so that we can hear Your truth. Lord, speak through us in this conference God. Thank You for the gift it is to be your child Lord. These things in Your powerful and precious and holy name. Amen.

[Piano stops playing]

Ron Hafer:

Thank you, C.J.. We will have those who--usually when people leave their Bible, they probably were going to go back and sit at the same place. So I'm suggesting that if people see a Bible that's left, you might just want to leave it there. But this was left and uh, and we'll put anything else that's left, left behind, right up here. If you were not here for the first session, let me be the first among those to welcome you to the 71st annual Torrey Memorial Bible Conference. We are off and running. It's very exciting. Men and women plan and program, and speakers are on the list,

and musicians, and hundreds of volunteers behind the scenes. But unless God shows up and works, we know that it's all in vain. And He is here and He is working. It's my privilege to introduce to you now, Mike Erre, who is going to open the word. He I, I thought-what I do is say a word for the off campus people who may never met him, but probably the two or three hundred off campus people are people who already know Mike Erre and probably over at Rock Harbor, Mike and Dana and Todd, and just a whole slew of staff over at Rock Harbor were trained at either Biola or Talbot School of Theology.

So when Mike was in chapel last year and I got to him as quickly as I could and asked if he had pray about being here at Torrey Memorial Bible Conference, he said yes. And I said, yes, you'll pray? And he said, no, yes, I'll come. And then he had two questions. He said--I thought it would be, how much do you pay? But he never asked that. He said, how much time will I have? A good key for a preacher, and do I have to wear long pants?

[Ron Hafer and audience laugh]

Ron Hafer:

And I said, the time is up to you and you feel comfortable. We prayed just before and I asked Michael how I could pray for him and he said, well, we're going to war. We're going to war. Speaking, as you know, already from the program on the theology of sex, it will have three parts. This will be, of course, the first having to do with creation, feel that God has his hand on this brother and on the topic. And we're just eager to watch and see what the Spirit of God does. Let's welcome Mike Erre back to Biola for his first Torrey Conference.

[Audience applauds]

Mike Erre:

Hey, thank you, thank you, thank you, so glad to be with you guys. Well you said it, we are-we are going to do three parts, really, of one-one topic. We're going to look at the theology of sex. We don't talk about sex. And the most important place is usually the church and the home. And we're going to use real words and we're going to talk pretty plainly. And none of that is to be offensive in any way, shape, or form, but it is to be faithful to scripture, and it's also to be relevant to the conversations that we're already having. I mean, that's the thing. If you don't-if you don't have these conversations in church and at home, you certainly have them elsewhere. I mean, we are learning about sexuality, whether that's from the locker room, whether that's from our friends experience, the media, the Internet, the whitewashed images of women all over the place. I mean, we're learning about it. And so when we had the opportunity to come up and to be with you, that was just one of the things that got kind of put on our heart was to come and to share this.

And it's really one message over the next three days. And it-really the punch line is Friday. We're bringing in some heavy artillery. My wife has come in to share her testimony on Friday and we're going have an extended time of ministry. And if you're here and you're husky, and you're bald, and you see her, you'll just have hope that God still--He still does work miracles. He really does.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

And-and-and I guarantee you will say, how did this work out? And I will simply say, I don't know, but I'm glad it did.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Um, so. So we're going to look at creation, what did God intend for sexuality. Because the church, oh, and I feel so free to criticize the church because I'm a part of the problem and Lord willing will be a part of the solution. But the church typically leads with thou shalt not. I hit puberty at 12. I got married at twenty-nine. Seventeen years of thou shalt not wasn't real helpful. There's just so much more to say. So we're going to talk about how scripture begins the story, and then the theology of sexuality has to begin there. Tomorrow we're going to talk about the fall, the reality in which most of us live. And if we had time and we were really honest, the amount of pain and brokenness and addiction in this room would be staggering in this area. And then Friday is the punch line, how does God redeem it beyond just telling Him I'm sorry for the thousandth time, what is a God to do? And we're going to do something creative and I hope will be a blessing to you as we kind of put some flesh on God's forgiveness in this area. So if you've got a Bible, let's go to the Book of Genesis. Why not start there? Genesis chapter one? We're just going to look at some pictures of what God intended for sexuality to be. Oh, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Is anyone else warm?

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Nope. Could you stand out back there, sir? Just for a second. Okay, you're small, so sit back down. I'm looking for big men who are warm right now. Thank you.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

But I appreciate, appreciate the Brotherhood.

[Mike Erre laughs]

Mike Erre:

Genesis chapter one. Yeah, we're sitting there. I'm like, I'm sweating already. I don't understand. And there's no hair to catch it. And so it just goes right.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

And I've got the Garth Brooks kind of mic on, which is always trouble. There could there could be some anyway.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Genesis chapter one, verse twenty-six. Wat did God intend for sexuality? God said let us make man, and that's generic so it's human beings, in Our image in Our likeness. Let them rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in His-in His own image, in the image of God. He

created a male and female, He created them. God blessed them, and said to them, be fruitful and increase the number. Now, obvious point. God didn't create a fraternity. He didn't create a society. One man. One woman. Right? Obvious. Thank you for that update, Mike go to Genesis chapter two. Genesis Chapter two, the second part of verse 20. But for Adam, no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. The Lord God made a woman from the rib He'd taken out of the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said, and you can only imagine. I mean, well, that's not--

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

The man said this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She should be called woman, for she was taken out of man. For this reason, a man will leave his Xbox move out by the time he's 30.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother. For this reason, a man will leave his father, mother and be united to his wife. The word united is bonded, it's glued, it cemented to his wife and the two will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame. Two huge points, Biola. Points that you don't often hear in the church. Point number one, sex is a great gift from a good God. We were sexual before we were sinful. Our sexuality is part of our humanness. It's part of God's gift to us. For 17 long years

between puberty and marriage. I thought it was God's curse and all I heard from the church was just stay away from it, which is impossible. There's no way we can cease to be sexual beings. So the scripture opens with male and female being sexual together. God commands them to be fruitful and multiply. Gee, I wonder how you do that. And all of a sudden you get a picture that they were naked, they were unashamed. There was nothing to interrupt their intimacy. It was perfect. It was beautiful. It was magnificent. It was good. So instead of starting with thou shalt not, what did God start with? Thou shalt be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth. That's a lot of multiplying, if you're into numbers.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Right. And so-and so we start the story as the church in Genesis three. Sex is dirty, it's naughty, it's bad. Bible doesn't begin the story that way. It is good. It is the good gift of a good God. It's not the enemy's territory. It's not his turf. It is rightfully an act of worship when done under God's blessing and providence. So we start the story here. Big point number two, we see in Genesis one and two is that sex is powerful. There is no other way for two individuals to become one, that sex is simply the most intimate, bonding, uniting, magnificent, mysterious thing that two people can do and somehow in some mystical way, their two-ness is joined together and they become one. There's no other way that happens in human relationships. Our culture makes sexuality about genitals and about body parts. It's a biological thing. We, as the church often say, our culture is too sexual, the scriptures would say our culture isn't sexual enough. Sex is so much more than just body parts, it's a joining of souls, it's a joining of cells, it's a knitting together in a way that simply cannot be undone. So the scriptures begin with two affirmations about sexuality. It's

awesome, it's good to be sexual, it's good to feel sexual feelings, romance, attraction, kissing, lovemaking, all of that is good.

It's not to be run from by single people. Most of you are not called to just be asexual. Most of you, meaning most of you, are single. You're not called to be asexual. You're sexual beings. You can't help it. You're male or female. Start there. And what the church simply says is you've got to take your sexuality and you just got to pretend it doesn't exist. That's never what the scripture teaches. This is a good gift. It's good to be sexual. It's good to be attracted. I mean, God could have had us reproduce by planting seeds in the ground, but He chose to make it a lot more fun.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

And for that, we're grateful. And I'm playing this up a little bit because, so much of the church is against it, even having the conversation, let alone starting the conversation by saying it's fantastic. Second thing, scripture says it's powerful, it's powerful. This is going to have ramifications for us. Now, let's go, if you would, to Matthew 19. What I want you to see is when you get to the New Testament, the New Testament grounds all of its sexual teaching into Genesis one and two, it's a really big point because unless you start with the thou shalt, the thou shalt not will sound arbitrary. They sound unfair. I mean, why would God give us the stuff? And then--I mean, for crying out loud, back then they were getting married at 12 and 13. Right? We're set up--we hit puberty then, and then we're waiting for however many years. And so we need to understand that thou shalt, then, has some implications for us. Matthew 19, When Jesus gets

asked about divorce, this was one of the great rabbinical debates of His day, and there were two schools.

One says you could divorce your wife for any reason as long as you gave her a certificate. Right, if she didn't cook well that day, or if she didn't perform well, or in any situation, as long as you give her a certificate, you divorce her. There was a school that had a much more strict interpretation. It simply said, no, no, no, it was for infidelity and those sorts of things. Jesus was asked to take sides. When Jesus finished saying these things, He left Galilee and went to the region of Judea on the other side of the Jordan. Large crowds followed Him and He healed them there. So Pharisees came to test Him. They ask, is it lawful for a man to divorce His wife for any and every reason? Now, the divorce things are a whole different topic. But I know, I want you to notice how Jesus answers the question, what He appeals to heaven to read. He replied, at the beginning, the Creator, quote, made the male and female. Right, Genesis one, and said, for this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. Genesis 2. So they are no longer two, Jesus says, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate. What has Jesus appealed to in the question of divorce, the power of sexuality?

He simply says, listen, let me tell you what God's intention was from the beginning. Male and female, the two becoming one flesh, and what God has joined, let no one separate. What I want you to see is this, and we're going to hit this a lot tomorrow. Your view of sex really ultimately hinges on your view of God. We--all these discussions about sexuality really hinge on what you think God is like. Is God holding out? Does He not have your best interests at heart? Does He

know what he's doing? And what Jesus appeals to when asked about this divorce issue is, hey, listen. The Creator designed male, female, and the two become one flesh. So here's Scripture's teaching. When you get into the New Testament, sexuality is so majestic and yet so sacred and so powerful. On the one hand, it's wonderful and it's not dirty and naughty and bad, on the other hand, it's powerful and anything that's powerful has rules that govern its behavior, I mean, for instance, when you go home to your dorm, your apartment or wherever, and let's say an electrician comes over and says, hey, listen, it's a really bad idea for you to dip your fingers in water and then stick them in an electrical socket.

Would, would, would you be angry at the electrician for giving you that warning? Is the electrician unfair, unjust, arbitrary for telling you that great harm can come from us using electricity now? Or how about the way the courts handle drunk driving? I mean, do we think the courts are unfair because they look at drunk drivers and say cars are way too powerful and too much damage can be done, so we just simply will not tolerate driving a car when you're drunk? Do we look at the courts and say they're arbitrary and unfair? Not at all, because we get that things that are powerful have rules that govern their behavior. That's the scripture. Teaching sex is fantastic, but it's so powerful that great harm can come from its misuse. And in the same way we look at the electrician or the courts, we should then look at God and simply say, okay, well, it'd be really fun to do now, but I mean, I guess I'll hold out. It is fantastic, but it's powerful and scripture grounds so much of its teaching in the New Testament by appealing to Genesis one and two, I mean, Paul will even do this in first Corinthians six, talking about joining because you are now a member of Christ, joining Christ with prostitutes and so on.

I mean, it's just this deep, powerful teaching. It's good. It's powerful. Now, I'm a big fan of show and tell. And instead of telling you that Scripture has a high view of sex, I want to show you the only sex scene I can find in the Bible. And if you've been at Rock Harbor, you've seen us do some teaching on this from Song of Solomon. We're going to go there in a moment. There's a big debate over the book, is that just a metaphor of God's love for His people? And it certainly is that, Paul teaches that marriage is that, human love relationships are that. But I think it's a little more than that, too. And so we want to look at six different aspects of divine sex. And it's going to get warmer, so hopefully my brother and I back there will make it and not melt too bad.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

But here's the reason we're going to do this. I want to convince you, not out of guilt, not out of drudgery and out of some legalistic well, you know, but through inspiring you that this is just simply the greatest thing ever and you can have five dollars today or you can have five million dollars three years from now, and that's the choice that sits before you in terms of what you do with your sexuality. So let's go to the book Song of Solomon. We're going to look, and if you're a note taker, don't worry about taking notes on this, I'd rather you just kind of soak in it a little bit and-and be inspired. Song of Solomon, we meet three characters. We're going to chapter four, we meet a man that is called the Lover, we meet a woman called the Beloved, and we meet a group of friends, the Community. We don't know who really they are. Some think it's the voice of God affirming the self. Others other people think, no, it's just the community. Some people don't even take this as literally as I'm going to take it. So we recognize there are some debates about it, but for theological reasons I will not delve into I think this is an appropriate way of understanding

the book as a love story between a man and a woman that puts on display God's desires for romance and sexuality.

So we've talked about it as good. It is powerful. Let's look at how that plays out. The first three chapters of Song of Solomon, they meet, fall in love, do the things that we all do, they get married at the end of chapter three. Chapter four, we are now in the Hotel Six in Jerusalem for their honeymoon. We're going to start in verse one. Now, some of these-some of these Jewish metaphors are funny.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

How beautiful--no, now I want you to notice first the guy doesn't start talking until verse 11 or so. He doesn't start putting the moves on until verse 11. He talks for ten verses, which is more than most men want to talk on their honeymoon night.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

But I want you to notice, well, I'll just read it and then we'll talk about it. He says, how beautiful you are, my darling. Oh, how beautiful. Your eyes behind your veil are doves. They speak of peace. Your hair is like a flock of goats.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

I have a small flock, evidently.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Your hair looks like a flock of goats descending from Mount Goliad. It speaks of God's provision, believe it or not, I mean, guys, if you want to try these on later, go for it.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn coming up from the washing, meaning they're clean, which is good. Fellas, you want to you want a woman with clean teeth. And then, each has its twin, not one of them is alone. So she's got all her teeth and they're clean. So that's, that's a big deal.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon. Your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate. Your neck is like the Tower of David, built with elegance on it, hang a thousand shields. He's he's saying that she's regal, right. So if you can get past all that weird, somebody actually, drew, I found this on the Internet. Somebody actually drew her, taking all of these literally. It was funny.

[Mike Erre and audience laugh]

Mike Erre:

Yeah. Oh, all right. Your neck is like the Tower of David, but with elegance on it. Hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors'. Your two breasts are like two forms, like twin fawns of a gazelle, that browse among the lilies. Men and women, this guy starts with something I call gentle wonder. He-they're obviously in the bridal chamber. They're obviously undressing. And what he does is that he leads with romance, the language of poetry, their language of passion. He recognizes, and you guys know the metaphor. There's a there's a crockpot-ness to a woman, a woman's sexuality, as opposed to kind of the microwave-ness of a guy's sexuality. You guys familiar with this?

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

No. Yes. Well, okay, kids, um, you should have learned this earlier, uh, for men--and I'm not trying to be cute or fun, although I do want to lighten, you know, because we are going to pound pretty hard here in a little bit in terms of getting tense. Um. But it is it is just fascinating. It's like we never talk about this stuff. And when you talk about it in a church setting or school setting or something like that, just, it's odd, doesn't it? Feels like we should be. I don't know. I don't know where I was going with that point. I don't even know if it was a point. What is this camera?

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Alright. Men, I'm stereotyping men, have the-the sexual kind of expression of a microwave, 30 seconds and we're ready. Women stereotypically are like crockpots, they have to stew and they

have to marinate and they have to you start in the kitchen, and you're cleaning, and you take out the trash. And it's just this, you know, for a guy you can be fighting five minutes before and it doesn't matter. A woman is a much more integrated being and it matters how like the last several hours have gone. And so, and so this guy recognizes, and this is a true statement, that a woman's great sex organ is her mind. They're whole creatures. And so what he does, he doesn't coerce. He doesn't manipulate, he doesn't pressure. He loves her. He romances her. He invites her into this romantic passion. Now expression of love, but no pressure. And it's the language of poetry and passion in men and women, I mean women in particular, in a culture that tells you you've got to be Botox, and in a culture that tells you you've got to starve yourself to somehow measure up to those ridiculous, whitewashed images that are painted all over the Internet, in a culture that tells you that how you look on the outside is the most important thing about you.

Can you imagine on your honeymoon night having a man who's looked at you like he's looked at no other woman and he simply says every detail about you is fantastic. I'm not disappointed. I'm delighted, though. Imagine. Imagine. What that does to a woman. I mean, isn't that-isn't that worth holding up for? And obviously, I mean, we could share the ways that many of us have blown it and there is redemption, and we are going to talk about it, but I just want you to know God's intention was to have sexuality. Be this gentle, full of gentle wonder, and you see this in him, he's almost-he's almost praising God for her. You know, I'm seriously-we should. I mean, I love that He made us so that we're attracted to each other, and I love that it matters to God. Next section of scripture. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, I will go to the mountain of Myhrr, to the hill of Incense. Hmm, I don't know what he's referring to there. Not. Um, until the day breaks and shadows sleep all night long, I will go to the mountain river and to the hill of

incense. I'm going to put the moves on you. He says, all beautiful, you are, my darling, there is no flaw in you.

What's fascinating is when you meet this woman in Chapter one of Song of Solomon, the first thing she says is that she doesn't like the way she looks. First thing, she won't compromise. She also says that, but the first thing she acknowledges about herself is that she's insecure. Now, I know we have friends that struggle with this. And so hypothetically, what we'd want to tell them is that God's intention is to find a guy who would take that insecurity, wrap it in praise, and hand it back, just bathed in love. He says to her--was she physically perfect? Probably not, but he says to her, there is no flaw in you. See, the reason all this Hollywood stuff is so false is you look at the real lives of the movie stars that--that portray the characters and the hottest people on earth can't stay married to each other. Right, because that kind of sex isn't sustainable. That's ridiculous. Real life does get in the way every now and again. And you see the movies and how they portray sexuality, and then you see the life of the movie stars and you just realize there's no way that's true. I'll tell you what biblical sex is. Biblical sex is two virgins are born again, virgins on their honeymoon who are just like two kids in a playground who haven't the foggiest idea what they're doing, but they have the rest of their life to figure it out. That's real sex, that's erotic.

[Silence]

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Oh, okay, well, it was for me, all right?

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Jump down to verse 10, two sacks full of gentle wonder, it's like giving-if you're trying to keep track of these six aspects. Thirdly, it's sensual. How delightful is your love? My sister, my bride? How much more pleasing is your love than wine and the fragrance of your perfume? More than any spice your lips drop. Sweetness is the honeycomb. My bride, milk and tongue. Excuse me. Hello. Hello. That's coming. Sorry I cut to the chase. Milk and honey are under your tongue now. How would you know that? Are they kissing? Is it French kissing? No, it is Hebrew kissing because France wasn't invented yet.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

All right. So let's not give them credit for that. Jesus, sexy, sensual, biblical sex, divine sex, it involves all of your senses. Your time disappears. There's this. I mean, it's I mean everything. It's this full. I mean, God is the God of props, right? For every abstract piece of doctrine He wants to teach you, he gives you a physical prop for it. So if you want to remember that you're forgiven, what do you do? Celebrate Communion. If you want to-if you want to have tangible expression that your new creation, the old is gone, the new has come, you're baptized. When two people, a man and a woman in a marriage relationship, want to demonstrate their love to one another, what do they do? They make love. This is the tangible putting on, into action, of all the stuff that you say to each other as a married couple. And God made it so that's fantastic to your senses. It's a full body experience. There's nothing that's left out in terms of--and Solomon gets at this a little bit. That is just fantastic. But we hold that intention with the following point, verse 12. You are a

garden locked up. Now, her sexuality throughout the book is referred to as a garden, so it's that mean she's a garden locked up.

My sister, my bride, you are a spring enclosed, there's another metaphor of her virginity. Sealed the fountain. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates. I have no idea seriously what this means. With choice fruits, with henna, and garden art, and saffron, calamus, and cinnamon with every kind of incense tree, with aloe and myrrhs, and all the finest spices. You are a garden fountain, a wealth of flowing water streaming down from Lebanon. He's affirming her purity. He is recognizing that sex is not only sensual, and it's awesome and it's fantastic, but that it's holy. Now, men and women. Again, I don't-and I don't want to be in any way offensive. But I just want to be honest. I came into my marriage as a virgin. My wife did not. She'll tell you this story Friday. Before she met Jesus, you know, she just bought the lie that many of us buy, that it's just body parts, it just doesn't matter. And so she'd given all that way and we came, she came to Jesus, He made a new creation, and so here we were on our honeymoon night. And I will simply tell you that all of the self-control, frustration, all of it that got me, by God's grace, to that moment, was worth it to experience the holiness. There's this Jewish teaching. That says that God dwells right above the beds of married people who make love, delighting in the fact that they delight in His gift.

I don't know if that's true, but it felt that way to be naked and unashamed. With my wife to pray, was just-it was worth it. It was just worth it. The hardest conversation I have with some married couples or married couples who stayed virgins for the wrong reasons. Sex is dirty, naughty, bad, they were taught. It's dirty, nasty, bad. Stay away, stay away. And then they can't just flip the

switch just simply because some preacher says you're married, that makes it okay. You'd be shocked at the number of people that struggle with this. That's why it's so important we hold two things in balance, it's good. So we hold out, it's good. So we wait, not because of a religious Puritans or fanatics or anything like that, but we believe God has for us the best sex ever. Not Hollywood sex, because that's not sustainable. Let me tell you that first night our sex was horrible. I didn't have a clue.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

I changed a couple of days later, but, you know, that's fine. I'm kidding. I'm totally kidding you guys. It's like junior high right now. You guys just kind of squirmy.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

I'm getting payments from these two. That's all I'm saying.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

I don't know. Here's the point. If there is a sexually free people on the planet, it should be the married and single followers of Jesus Christ. Cultures lies about what liberation is, the bonding and the ripping and the bonding to another person and ripping away from them and bonding and then ripping again. Our culture is a culture of slaves that tell us they're free. We, the church, often don't say much about this. So that's the reason we're trying to be playful and that's the

reason we're going into this teaching. Not trying to be cute. Really trying to say, you know, with what we prayed about, I mean, we are going to war. If we took an inventory of the number of rapes, the number of you've been molested, the number of you that are addicted to pornography and masturbation, the amount of shame and guilt that you carry, the amount of loneliness you feel. If we were to take an inventory of what's really going on, not what you show people, but what really is going on, we would be here for weeks. And it just grieves me that the church doesn't help you by saying, here is the glorious gift. And you don't have to wait because, you know, you're Christian, you don't have to wait because it's just the religious thing to do.

I want you to see that it's just simply worth it. She responds, the beloved, verse 16. This would probably be top 10 things you want to hear on your honeymoon night, she says a weak north wind and come south, wind blowing my garden that its fragrance might spread abroad. Let my lover come into his garden and taste its choice fruits. Holy moly. So we will say divine sex is responsive, let's just put it that way, he woos her, he romances her, he pursues her, he recognizes she's a whole creature and that she's coming in. I mean, sexualize the most vulnerable place that you can be, you know, I mean, obviously you're physically naked, but you're also emotionally vulnerable, too, and that is why there is such carnage. But that's also why there can be so much joy and life. She responds to him and then the curtain comes down. God would appropriately just says, you know, that's-that's-that's all you get. Curtain comes back up, chapter five, verse one. And the lover speaks, he says, I've come into my garden, my sister, my bride, past tense, I've gathered my mirror with my spies, I've eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I've drunk my wine and my milk, just in other words, for is great. And notice nine times uses the word my. That's not

a matter of like possessiveness. It's a matter of unity. Like we're now one flesh, as Paul will say later.

Husbands, your body is no longer your own, your responsibility. Please your wives. And wives, your body is no longer your own responsibility, please your husbands. Now, brothers and sisters, here's what I'd like to invite you into. First of all, I want you to understand that your view of sex is tied to your view of God. And that we have to come to believe to the depths of our souls that God is good. This is His good gift, not the enemy's territory, you don't have to feel guilty for having sexual feelings or being sexually attracted. It's part of what it is to be human. And it's a good thing. Is it tainted and fallen? Yes. And believe me, we're going to dive into the ugliness of this tomorrow. But what I want for you just to hear resoundingly is that God is good. He's good in this. And this is His great gift to you. We have a treasury agent, a Secret Service agent that works to spot counterfeit money in our church and, he was just fascinating when they said, you know how we're trained? And I'm like, no, but I think it's cool no matter what it is.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

And he said, in order to teach us how to spot counterfeits, they immerse us only in the real thing. They never show us a counterfeit. They just show us the real thing over and over and over. And this morning, I just wanted to emphasize a little bit in the real thing, so that maybe the counterfeits just weren't as attractive. Men and women, I don't know where you're at, I don't know if you hear this and it makes you feel more lonely, I don't know if you hear this and you feel like you've fallen and God could never forgive you. I don't know if you hear this and you're

mad because it means you have to give up having sex with your boyfriend or girlfriend. I don't know how you are hearing this. I simply would ask one thing of you if you're going to be here the next couple of days. Would you simply open up the deepest parts of you, the darkest parts of you to what God may say? Would you for those of you that have been abused, molested, raped, would you just dare to even open that up just a little in the hope that God may restore, redeem, that you might enjoy this someday?

For those of you that like me, I have had a lifelong struggle with pornography. I hate it. I hate it. I hate that, too. Kidding. Just a little. What I hope for you is that you had a you have an experience like I had literally when I was 23. It was a solid Damascus experience and the battle, the battle changed that day. We'll talk about it tomorrow. I want that for you. I want you guys to be so passionate about how good God is and how great this is, that abstinence, what-what oh, what a crazy word that is, that you just simply say, you know what, I'm worth more than that and sex is worth more than that. I'm not trying to preach at you from any other place than just a fellow brother who's a little ahead, very little ahead of you in terms of age.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

And who is simply trying to spare you the pain that I've experienced? And the pain that comes walking in my office almost on a weekly basis. From walking outside of what God has, you have to understand that when you walk outside the boundaries of God in this area, you are saying that He is not good. Because He tells us His commands are good. And by following our own way, really, what are we saying? I know better, Your commands are not good, therefore You aren't.

This all hinges on your view of God, and so I'm so excited to have the privilege of beginning the conversation and finishing it tomorrow. All right, so let's pray together. Lord Jesus, I just thank You for the great trust that, I mean, to have the opportunity to influence so many leaders in Your kingdom, where I just feel the weight of that and I, I pray for the other teachers, I pray for the worship. I pray, Lord, that there would just be a tenderness and a sweetness and a richness to what goes on in this place. And that, Lord, You would-we know You're everywhere, but that You would-You would just mark this territory off for something unique and something worth the investment.

And Lord, I pray for my brothers and sisters, Your sons and daughters, Lord, You know their hearts. They can't hide from You. So I just pray for him You'd be relentless. And the word is they wonder and they listen and they just relate and talk and process or God that You would just call them deep. And to Your grace and to Your mercy and to worshipful obedience, Lord, where there's conviction needed, would You bring it? Would You purify us, as Your people thought was there, as encouragement needed? Would You bring that in there? There are some who are so heartbroken here, or would You just provide hope and comfort? Lord, we praise You that the sacrifice of Jesus allows us, a sinful people, to approach Your throne, so we just grab hold of that. None of us can stand before You and boast in our own righteousness. So, Lord, we recognize that though the standard is wonderful, Lord, we're continually choosing between that and the counterfeits. Give us strength, further renew our minds and our hearts. Redeem us for Your glory, amen.