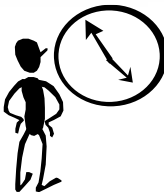


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
(Or every other week)

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.
Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

What Would You Do if Your Child Came Out as Trans?

By Jeffrey W. Hamilton

Question:

I am a transgender woman and I listen to one of your sermons and have explored your site quite a bit, and I am just disturbed.

I will be honest I am not a Christian, I am an atheist. I grew up a Southern Baptist, I used to hold Bible studies every morning in the cafeteria during high school. The funny thing is that I have wanted to believe in a God, but I look at the church today and see so much hate that even if God was real, I would choose not to believe in Him solely because of the church.

I have heard the argument so many times that I want to end my life.

"God only created two genders."

"Why are you going against God's will?"

As much as I would love to argue with your church about the issue of transgenderism, I am genuinely curious about what you would do if your son/daughter came out as trans?

Let's assume that you know that you are never going to convince them otherwise. They still love God and still believe in the teachings of the Bible, but they think God made them trans.

Would you reject them?

Would you call them by their preferred name?

Would you use their pronouns?

Would you drive them to their doctor's appointments?

Would you still love them?

Would you still treat them as humans?

Would you defend them from being bullied for being trans?

As you can probably tell I have experience in this. My brother doesn't talk to me, my parents are not supportive, and my grandparents pretend I am dead.

Thanks for your time.

Answer:

As a Christian, I worship the one and only God. His teachings are truth. "*Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth*" (John 17:17). Truth is singular. There isn't a truth for you that is different from the truth for me.

I realize that you are writing in hopes of causing a quarrel. Remember that you asked. But in asking a question, it doesn't mean the answer you get will be to your liking.

This brings me to my first point, what a person claims does not create truth. People all too often lie. "*May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, 'That You may be justified in Your words, and prevail when You are judged'*" (Romans 3:4). Your feelings about a matter don't create truth. Feelings change constantly and rapidly. "*He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered*" (Proverbs 28:26). The number of people claiming something is true doesn't create truth. People too often follow the crowd instead of thinking for themselves. "*Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it*" (Matthew 7:13-14). Nor does it matter what your relatives think. "*Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me*" (Matthew 10:34-37).

God has always been against lying. Lies are against His very nature. "*But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and **all liars**, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*" (Revelation 21:8).

From what I gather, you are a man but wish to claim you are a woman. Science shows there are two genders: males with XY chromosomes and females with XX chromosomes. The Bible also states this obvious fact: "*male and female He created them*" (Genesis 1:27). You even acknowledge this. Since you are dissatisfied with your maleness, you selected the only other alternative. Thus, despite your words to the contrary, you demonstrate that people come in two genders -- you just want to be seen as the gender that you are not. You know you can't really become the opposite gender, so you cover this with a pretense that there are additional genders. However, this is just one lie to patch over problems created by the first lie. You started out saying "I will be honest," but then you proceeded to express things that are not true. I find that disappointingly sad.

God doesn't allow me to support sins, including lies. "*If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds*" (II John 10-11). Friendship doesn't alter this. A family relationship doesn't alter this.

You label ideas contrary to your own as "hate," but no hatred is involved. What I just expressed are reasoned thoughts based on truth. Love requires that I wish others no harm, either now or in the future. Because I love people, I tell them the truth. It might hurt their feelings, but that is better than them suffering from the consequences of their self-deception (assuming they listen to the truth).

The concept of Christianity is not about accepting people living in their sins, but to tell people that they can change. Sins can be left behind and the person can be whole once again. *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God"* (II Corinthians 5:17-20). Whether you decide to change is your choice. No one can make that decision for you. I can only encourage you to be honest with yourself and others.

Response:

I am so sorry, I should not have sent that email. I was not in the right state of mind. I was angry and lashing out and that was unfair to you.

As much as I disagree with your belief, I am still an American and believe in your

Christ, Our Shepherd

By Jeffrey W. Hamilton

Text: John 10

We live in a fearful time. Most other people in most other times would think it strange that Americans today are as afraid as they are. After all, we live in the heart of the territory controlled by the greatest military power of all time. There has not been a war here for more than 150 years. Far from being worried about famine, we have so much to eat that we are more concerned about gaining too much weight. We have access to such good medical care that most of us can expect to live to ages far beyond what our brethren in the first century would have expected.

Nonetheless, we are afraid. We are afraid of COVID, afraid of politicians that we think are hostile to us, afraid of societal change that we think is for the worst, and probably afraid even of things that we can't put a name to. Optimism about the future is sadly out of fashion.

When we wrestle with fear, we should remember all the reasons that God gives us not to be afraid. It may be that not everything in our earthly lives goes our way, but through His son Jesus, He will take care of what is most important. This morning, then, let's see what we can learn from John 10 about Christ our Shepherd.

LISTENING TO THE SHEPHERD

The first section of our text concerns Jesus as the gate of the sheep. Let's look at John 10:1-10. There are a couple of different elements to Jesus' words here that are well worth our attention. Of course, in this text, we are the sheep, and Jesus tells us that we can expect to encounter two categories of people. One is made up of thieves and robbers. The other is only occupied by Jesus. The sheep don't listen to the thieves and robbers; they only listen to Him.

For us, this underscores the importance of listening only to the words of our Lord and identifying all the other religious voices that are not His. In this world, there is an abundance of false teachers. They occupy pulpits all across our country and the world, and every one of them teaches something that according to the Scriptures is not the word of Jesus.

Make no mistake, brethren! These are not good people who have made a mistake but have useful things to say to us. They are thieves and robbers. If we listen to them, they will lead us away from Jesus for their own benefit. Instead, we must be careful to listen only to the word of Christ and reject anything and everything that does not come from it.

So too, notice what Jesus says about Himself as the gate. If we enter by Him, we will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. This language should remind us, as Jesus intended for it to do, of Psalm 23 and its beautiful depiction of what it means to have the Lord as our shepherd. When God takes care of you, He makes sure that you have everything you need.

By contrast, the devil wants us to believe that Jesus will not provide for us if we follow Him. He wants us to think that the grass is better where Jesus does not lead us, that the best life is lived apart from Christ. This is one hundred percent a lie! He intends our harm, not our good. By contrast, if we stick close to Jesus, we will find that we lack nothing.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Second, Jesus describes himself as the Good Shepherd. Let's continue our reading with John 10:11-21. Here, our Lord shows us how he is different from a hireling. The hireling flees from the wolf, allowing the wolf to destroy the sheep. By contrast, the good shepherd, even though he is not equipped to defend himself from the wolf, will die in order to keep the sheep safe.

Of course, this is exactly what Jesus did. The wolf that He had to face down was none other than the devil, who came to devour all our souls. Even Jesus could not save us from Satan by living. Instead, He had to die. He willingly laid down his life for our sakes.

We need to remember this anytime we get to feeling down on ourselves. The devil loves to try to convince us that we're worthless, and that nobody places any value

on us. Jesus did. He loved and still loves you, me, and every Christian enough to suffer, bleed, and die for us. He is good, and His goodness is revealed in the greatness of His love.

Let's pay attention also to His words in verse 16. Here, we learn that one of Jesus' great goals as the Good Shepherd is to bring all of His sheep from different pens together into one. Since the beginning, His church has had a sad history of division, but His desire is for all of us to be united.

We can't do anything about the contentiousness and pride of other people in other places, but we can make sure that in this congregation we stay united. Indeed, one of the things that I most love about this church is the willingness of so many not to press their views and judgments on others, rather choosing to maintain the unity of the Spirit.

We can't compromise on the truth, of course, but it is vital for us to be able to tell the difference between what the Bible says and what we think. Believe me; I know just how tempting it is to get on one of my hobby horses and take a lap around the auditorium! However, such self-righteous behavior does not glorify God. When we instead humbly, patiently pursue the things that make for peace while remaining focused on the Scriptures, He is pleased.

THE SHEPHERD'S PROTECTION

Finally, let's ponder Jesus' words about the safety of the sheep. We'll conclude our reading with John 10:22-30. Here, we find a verse that Calvinists love to take out of context. They love to seize on verse 28 and insist that it teaches that it is impossible for a Christian to fall away.

This is a strange thing to believe, especially given that in Matthew 24, Jesus prophesies about a time in which He says many will fall away. Of course, there is no contradiction between His teaching in Matthew 24 and His teaching in John 10. Instead, we need to look at the way that Jesus describes His sheep just a verse earlier, in verse 27.

According to him, His sheep are those who hear His voice, present tense, and who follow Him, again present tense. This promise isn't about those who followed Jesus at some point in the past and aren't following Him anymore. Instead, it is about those who are following Him right now.

If we are striving to follow Him, His promise does apply to us, and it should give us great assurance and hope. Our salvation is not dependent on how good we are. Instead, it depends on how strong He is. No matter how hard the devil pulls, he will not be able to pull us out of the hands of Jesus, and if that's not enough, the Father Himself will exert his strength to keep us safe.

Here too, the devil loves to prey on our minds and try to make us afraid. Fear is one of his favorite tools. Because of Jesus, though, we don't have to be afraid. We can be confident of our salvation, but our confidence is not in ourselves. It is in Him.