

CHRIST CHURCH COURSES

LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

SESSION 3: *THE BEAUTIFUL STORY 2*

Learning Aim: by the end of the session participants will have a good understanding of the current teaching of the Church of England by considering the CEEC statement on marriage and sex and the second half of *The Beautiful Story*.

Pastoral aim: that the group have explored the current teaching of the Church of England about being human, marriage and sexuality. With clarity on the current teaching and its pastoral implications we will be able to make an informed assessment of the case for change in these areas. Recognising that some of the teaching may be hard for some to receive we seek God's goodness in its purposes as well as an open mind to whether it is an accurate interpretation of God's will.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction and welcome (4m)
2. Story Time (5m)*
3. CEEC statement on marriage and sex (1m)
4. Right repentance (15m)
5. Real clarity (15m)
6. What does the Bible say? (40m)*
7. Story Time (5m)*
8. Time for reflection (5m)*

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME (5m)

Christ Church Courses – Living in Love and Faith Workshops

LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

0. Engaging Well

1. What does the church believe?
2. The Beautiful story 1

3. The Beautiful Story 2

4. Living out the Beautiful Story
5. The case for change
6. Implications of change
7. Gender

In the last session we looked at the first part of *The Beautiful Story*. It told of the current teaching of the church about what it is to be human, about marriage and about sex and its place in relationships and in society.

This week we continue that story by looking at how this has played out in church and society in the past and what it might mean for us now.

Let us pray.....

We pray Come Holy Spirit. Grant us the openness to hear your voice. The wisdom to discern through your voice, your command and your heart. The humility to receive, to be challenged and to see things afresh as you lead us. In the name of your Son, our savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

2. STORY TIME 1: Sara

Sara has intersex traits. Watch Sara's story at <https://lhf.churchofengland.org/mod/videotime/view.php?id=586>

3. CEEC STATEMENT OF FAITH: MARRIAGE AND SEX

A reminder of the CEEC statement on marriage and sex from the CEEC constitution 4.1.2.:

We acknowledge God's creation of humankind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family. We repent of our failures to maintain this standard and call for a renewed commitment to lifelong fidelity in marriage and abstinence for those who are not married.

We will continue to watch the video in segments.

4. RIGHT REPENTANCE

Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ts938KE8vQE>

What is human flourishing?

Why is repentance central to the Gospel ministry and the ministry of reconciliation?

In what ways has the church been homophobic? How should we define that term?

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)

5. REAL CLARITY¹

Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0zOyvpo2ig>

How important is it that Jesus was single and celibate?

Does the church's teaching say that it is a sin to be same-sex attracted?

*If you believe scripture to be wrong on **this** issue what other implications might this have for your understanding of the rest of scripture?*

If same-sex sexual activity is a sin should we say so?

**The fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring for ever.
The decrees of the Lord are firm,
and all of them are righteous.**

**¹⁰ They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb. (Psalm 19:9-10)**

6. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

What does the bible say? – take some time to consider the following passages and what they might say about being human, marriage and sexuality. (NB: we will come back to these passages in more detail in a later session).

Creation 1: Genesis 1:26-28

⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,^[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

¹ For an accessible orthodox biblical theology of relationships see John Mark Comer *Loveology* book or watch the talks on YouTube searching for "Loveology"; you will find the first one at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iuVY5wC39M&t=2116s>

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.

Creation 2: Genesis 2:23-25

²³ The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."

²⁴ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

²⁵ Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Jesus on marriage and sex in Matthew

⁴ "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'⁵ 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'? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."**(19:4-6)**

² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. **(5:32)**

¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. **(15:19)**

⁹ I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." **(19:9)**

Sodom and Gibeah

⁴ But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. ⁵ And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.".....²⁴ Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the

Lord out of heaven. ²⁵ And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. **(Genesis 19:4-5, 24-25)**

the men of the city, worthless fellows, surrounded the house, beating on the door. And they said to the old man, the master of the house, "Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him." ²³ And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brothers, do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not do this vile thing. ²⁴ Behold, here are my virgin daughter and his concubine. Let me bring them out now. **(Judges 19:22-24)**

In a similar way, **Sodom** and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. **(Jude 1:7)**

Holiness code in Leviticus

²² You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. (18:22)

¹³ If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them (20:13)

Paul's letters

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. 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. **(Romans 1:26-27)**

⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,^[b] ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. **(1 Cor 6:9-11)**

(b) [1 Corinthians 6:9](#) The two Greek terms translated by this phrase refer to the passive and active partners in consensual homosexual acts; note that the word's Homosexual and Heterosexual were coined only in the late 1800's

⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers,^[a]

liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted. **(1 Timothy 1:8-11)**

7. STORY TIME: Phil and Ici

Ici was brought up in care and wanted through her own family to offer stability and love. Watch the video at

<https://llf.churchofengland.org/mod/videotime/view.php?id=580>

8. TIME FOR REFLECTION

Together we sit in silence and ask God to guide us through what we have explored so far.

Next time we will be looking at what it means to live out the current teaching of the church. **We will be using the notes** rather than videos so please could you **read through the notes for next session** so that we can concentrate our time on the discussion.