

Rev. Tim Keller's Disappointing Comments on Homosexuality (with Postscript)

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A YouTube video entitled “[What do Christians have against Homosexuality? Tim Keller at Veritas \[8 of 11\]](#)” is getting significant play in Exodus circles as supporting Alan Chambers’ flawed theology in assuring “gay Christians” that unrepentant continuance in homosexual practice is no obstacle to inheriting the kingdom of God. Though the video was uploaded at the end of Nov. 2011, I saw it for the first time only a couple of days ago. It shows Rev. Tim Keller, prominent pastor of Redeemer Church in New York City (part of the Presbyterian Church of America, a conservative denomination that does not ordain women), being interviewed by Columbia University historian David Eisenbach for the Veritas Forum at Columbia University.

Toward the end of the interview Eisenbach asked Keller about whether he thought homosexual people will go to hell:

I wrote a book about the gay rights movement because I was appalled by the oppression and the discrimination against homosexuals in my America. This questioner asked, “What do so many of the churches have against homosexuals and what about your church’s approach to homosexuality? Is it a sin? Are they going to hell?”

This question led to a 6-minute response on Rev. Keller’s part that I have to say is disappointing. In Rev. Keller’s defense, let me say that some allowance has to be made for the venue (New York City, Columbia University, responding to a homosexualist professor with perhaps a majority of people in the audience left of center), the time (only 6 minutes), and the intent of the speaker (Rev. Keller trying not to alienate others from the Christian faith). Maybe too some allowance should be made for the “Stockholm Syndrome”: he has imbibed the culture of New York City for too long.

Even with these considerations I still find his response to be disappointing, especially as regards his unqualified insistence that homosexual practice will not send anyone to hell; but also for criticizing the church in an unqualified way for “oppression of homosexuals,” claiming that an act of homosexual intercourse is not as bad as an instance of greed (any greed), and viewing sin merely as “something not good for human flourishing.” Much of the response had the feel of a dodge and some of what Rev. Keller said is so misleading as to come under the rubric of misinformation. This isn’t justified even when one is in “seeker-friendly” mode.

I will also grant that I have not explored other statements that Rev. Keller has made about homosexual practice (here’s one that someone forwarded to me: http://www.redeemer.com/news_and_events/newsletter/index.html?aid=363). Rev. Keller’s view may be more biblically accurate than the video suggests (and I will certainly see if I can contact Rev. Keller about this). However, a video interview has a life of its own. Some Christians will circulate this video as justification for their own anti-scriptural views. So a response to the arguments that he makes in the video is justifiable. I hope that Rev. Keller himself will issue a statement providing clarification.

What follows is my own transcript of the ensuing discussion. I leave out a few irrelevant statements (denoted by dots) but report verbatim nearly the whole. Following the transcript I offer a 4-point analysis.

Keller: “[Christians over the years have said:] The Bible has reservations [about homosexual practice]. The Bible says: Homosexuality is not God’s original design for sexuality. The Bible also says: Love your neighbor. In fact, the Good Samaritan parable ... [tells us that] everybody is your neighbor.... It is the job of a Christian to do what Jesus did on the cross, which was to give himself for people who were opposing him.... So a Christian is supposed to say, ‘I serve the needs and interests of all my neighbors in the city, whether gay or straight, whether Hindu or Muslim.’ Hindus, for instance, don’t believe in the Trinity. It is a different view than what the

Bible says. Gay people have a different view of sexuality than generally what you see in the New Testament. I'm supposed to love my neighbor. So at this point I see some churches that are basically ignoring the places of the Bible that talk about homosexuality in order to love their gay neighbor. And I see other Christian churches taking very seriously what the Bible says about homosexuality but in a very self-righteous way. So they actually do single out gay people. There are a number of conservative churches that will love their Hindu neighbors and will love their Muslim neighbors but not their gay neighbors. I really don't think there is any excuse for that. Therefore I have to take some responsibility of being a member of the Christian church for the oppression of homosexuals."

Eisenbach: "Are committing homosexual acts a sin against God?"

Keller: "What do you mean by sin? The answer is 'Yes.' Now here is the problem with that: You don't go to hell for being homosexual."

Eisenbach: "But committing homosexual acts will get you to go to hell ... doing gay stuff?"

Keller: "No, first of all heterosexuality does not get you to heaven [laughter], I happen to know this, so how in the world can homosexuality send you to hell? ... Jesus talked about greed 10 times more than he talked about adultery, for example. Now one of the problems Christians have here ... Let's be nice to Christians: You know when you are committing adultery ... but almost nobody knows when they are greedy. Nobody thinks they are greedy.... However, the fact of the matter is that the Bible is much harder on greed. It's a horrible sin, a terrible sin. Will greed send you to hell? No, what sends to hell is self-righteousness, thinking you can be your own savior and lord. What sends you to heaven is getting a connection with Christ because you realize that you are a sinner and you need intervention from outside. That's why it is very misleading even to say homosexuality is a sin because Yes, of course, homosexuality is a sin, because greed is a sin, because all kinds of things are sins, but what most Christians mean when they say that and certainly what non-Christians think they hear when they hear that is that if you are gay you are going to hell for being gay. It is just not true, absolutely not true."

Eisenbach: "So how is homosexuality a sin?"

Keller: "Well, greed is a sin. It doesn't help human flourishing. Basically, Christianity has an account of what we think human beings were built to do and what will help human flourishing. So we would say: If you spend all your money on yourself, that's bad, not only for your own soul but for everyone else's. We would say that homosexuality is not the original design for sexuality. Therefore it is not good for human flourishing. We want people to do things that are good for human flourishing but that is not what sends people to heaven and hell. Now maybe we have to talk about that. What sends you to heaven or hell really has to do with your faith in the gospel which is that you can't be your own savior through your own performance and good works. Now I'm coming at this like a Protestant now..... There is difference of opinion within Christianity about this. But, no, being gay doesn't send you to hell and sin doesn't send you to

hell, like that. The sin underneath the sin is that ‘I am my own savior and lord.’ And that is the reason why Pharisaism, moralism, Bible-believing people who are proud and think that God is going to take them into heaven because they are good, that’s sending them to hell. I mean, I know that this is a lot to take in at once, a lot.... Inside our church, therefore, there is just not going to be this disdain of homosexuals. There just can’t be—not when I’m teaching the gospel like that.

Comments:

1. ***Does the church in fact oppress homosexual persons?*** Rev. Keller criticizes “the Christian church for the oppression of homosexuals.” But he never specifies what that is. The vast majority of what counts as “oppression of homosexuals” for homosexual activists should not in fact be considered oppression by Christians: opposing the ordination of homosexually active persons, opposing granting any of the benefits of marriage to homosexual relationships (which relationships are constituted from the get-go in sin), opposing “sexual orientation” laws that inevitably lead to the attenuation of the civil liberties of those who find homosexual practice to be morally wrong, etc. In only criticizing the church for “oppression of homosexuals” and leaving unmentioned the huge qualification that opposing the homosexualist agenda for society does not in fact constitute “oppression” Rev. Keller’s remarks have the feel of throwing much of the church under the bus (especially given the interviewer’s opening comment). Moreover, he says nothing about the hatred and intolerance for orthodox Christians by homosexualist forces. It is certainly true that a minority of individual Christians wrongly treat homosexually active persons as beyond the pale of any Christian outreach in love. However, what occurs is not overt oppression by churches but the absence of acts of love by some individual Christians.
2. ***Is it the case that homosexual practice will not send anyone to hell?*** Rev. Keller declares categorically that homosexual practice (and sin generally) will not send anyone to hell but only the self-righteousness of thinking that “I am my own savior and lord.” “And that is the reason why Pharisaism, moralism, Bible-believing people who are proud and think that God is going to take them into heaven because they are good, that is sending them to hell.” But claiming to be a follower of Christ while repeatedly and unrepentantly engaging in gross sexual immorality will not send one to hell? Certainly, refusing to accept Christ as one’s Savior and Lord confirms one’s destination will not be heaven. But what is misleading in Keller’s presentation is that self-professed believers who engage unrepentantly in homosexual practice or in other ways show themselves to be slaves of sin will not inherit God’s kingdom because they show their ‘faith’ to be

something other than saving faith. True faith trusts in Christ's saving work and issues in a life no longer lived in the main for oneself but for God. When the lives of self-professed believers are grossly incongruent with a claim to faith in Christ as Lord, when they do not bear appropriate "fruit," Christ casts them away as not genuine believers or as believers who have fallen away from the faith. I find it hard to believe that Keller would have been so misleading in his answer if the question was about unrepentant serial killers, those who regularly defraud others of their life savings and refuse to repent, or unrepentant perpetrators of rape, incest, or pedophilia. There is a reason why Paul warned the Corinthians, in treating a case of adult-consensual incest at Corinth: "Do not be deceiving yourselves: Neither the sexually immoral [including the incestuous man in ch. 5], nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor 'soft men' (*malakoi*; i.e. men who feminize themselves to attract male sex partners), nor men who lie with a male (*arsenokoitai*), nor thieves, nor greedy defrauders [or: extortionists], not drunkards, not those who viciously slander others, not robbers, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9-10). That reason was not to assure the Corinthian believers that participating in extreme sexual immorality and other grave offenses could not get them sent to hell.

3. ***Is greed—indeed any experience of a greedy impulse—far worse than homosexual practice?*** Rev. Keller compares homosexual intercourse to any instance of greed and argues that the latter is far worse based on frequency of mention by Jesus ("10 times more than he talked about adultery"). This completely overlooks the point that sexual impurity was not a major problem in the Palestinian Jewish society that Jesus addressed. Jesus said not a thing against having sex with one's mother, rape, and pedophilia but does Rev. Keller seriously think that any desire for a little more money is far worse than these grave offenses? Sexual immorality was a major problem in the Gentile world so that it is not surprising that Paul makes it no. 2 on his list of things to address after the issue of idolatry. Moreover, when Jesus and Paul address the issue of greed as a factor that can exclude self-professed believers from the kingdom of God, they are not talking about problems with greedy impulses that all humans struggle with on a daily basis but those who extort and defraud and steal from those living on the economic margins of life and who amass great wealth in the process (the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is a case in point). As homosexual practice is regarded in Scripture as an extreme offense within the general category of sexual sin (as is bestiality, incest, and adultery), it can only be compared with the most extreme manifestations of material exploitation of others. At Corinth the "haves" were humiliating the "have-nots" and many of the Corinthian believers were (in Paul's words) "puffed up" or inflated with arrogance. Nevertheless, it was only in the case of the incestuous man, an instance of gross sexual immorality, that Paul demanded removal of the offender from the life of the community. Evidently, Paul did not regard the instances of greed and pride exhibited at Corinth as serious as this particularly extreme case of sexual immorality.

4. *Is the only thing bad about sin that it does not help human flourishing?* Rev. Keller appears to have a reduced understanding of sin as merely something that is “not good for human flourishing” but can’t send one to hell. “We want people to do things that are good for human flourishing but that is not what sends people to heaven and hell.” Rev. Keller, intentionally or not, was giving the impression that homosexual practice is not so bad. It’s kind of a minor sin. It’s just not going to give a person an optimal life where “human flourishing” can take place. This is incorrect. Immoral behaviors are also grave offenses to God. Homosexual practice is repeatedly designated in Scripture as an action that is “abhorrent” to God (as are some other grievous moral offenses). Human sin is what creates the judgment of hell in the first place. True, one is delivered from that judgment if one puts one’s faith in Christ as Savior and Lord. But if one claims to have such saving faith while continuing to live unrepentantly in egregious immorality then one is a liar. Paul is emphatic that only those who are being led by the Spirit and who “put to death the deeds of the body” are true children of God who will inherit eternal life (Rom 8:12-14). A life given over to the primary service of sin is no Christian life and leads to the offender’s destruction (so Paul in the places where he deals most profoundly with the question of the believer’s relationship to sin: Rom 6:1-7:6; 8:1-14; Gal 5:13-25; 6:7-10).

Rev. Keller is a Calvinist. So one might claim that he is simply offering a Reformed “perseverance of the saints” perspective that might be at odds with a Arminian-Wesleyan view but still represents a respectable biblical option. Not so. Rev. Keller’s view on the essential character of the transformed life, at least as expressed in this interview, compares unfavorably with the view of John Calvin. Calvin, no slouch when it came to advocating the eternal security of the believer, said: “Those in whom the Spirit does not reign do not belong to Christ; therefore those who serve the flesh are not Christians, for those who separate Christ from his Spirit make him like a dead image or a corpse. . . . Free remission of sins cannot be separated from the Spirit of regeneration. This would be, as it were, to rend Christ asunder.” It tears Christ apart because it divides the acknowledgment of Christ as Savior from the acknowledgement of Christ as Lord. Those who claim to have accepted Christ as Lord but who live as if sin is in fact their Lord will be recompensed with death rather than receive the gift of eternal life (see Rom 6:15-21).

Rev. Keller’s view also compares unfavorably with the view expressed recently by Prof. Michael Horton (Ph.D., Oxford University) of Westminster Seminary in California, a Calvinist theologian who supports the eternal security of the believer:

It is as unloving to hold out hope to those who embrace a homosexual lifestyle as it is to assure idolaters, murderers, adulterers, and thieves that they are safe and secure from all alarm. . . . Paul’s point is clear: For Gentiles, sexual immorality (including homosexuality, within proper social boundaries) is normal, but to take that view is to exclude oneself from the kingdom of Christ. A proud sinner defiantly ignoring the lordship of Christ while professing to embrace him as

Savior is precisely what Paul says is impossible. These passages do not threaten believers who struggle with indwelling sin and fall into grievous sins (see Romans 7 for that category); rather, they threaten professing believers who do not agree with God about their sin.... [By] refusing to agree with God about the nature of such behavior as sinful, those who embrace sexual immorality as a lifestyle reject the gospel. One cannot even seek forgiveness for something that one does not regard as sinful in the first place.... We dare not try to cut Christ in pieces, as if we could receive him deliverer from sin's guilt but not from its dominion, or as Savior but not as Lord" ("[Let's Not Cut Christ to Pieces](#)," *Christianity Today* online, 7/12/12).

The New Testament is quite clear on the point that saving faith necessarily produces a transformed life lived for God and in conformity to the Spirit of Christ. For a selection of texts that make the point, see <http://robgagnon.net/RHNEternalSecurityQuestion.htm>.

In the end, Prof. Eisenbach may have offered a closer representation of what Scripture says about homosexual practice than Rev. Keller. Rev. Keller wanted to communicate that Christians should reach out to homosexually active persons with love and not with disdain. This desire is well and good. However, his actual response was a dance around the question raised by Prof. Eisenbach and misleading at best, theologically wayward at worse. Simply put, it is true that homosexually active, self-professed Christians who refuse to repent will not inherit the kingdom of God. To be sure, this applies as well to many other serial-unrepentant, egregious instances of immorality. Moreover, forgiveness of sins is available to those who repent and turn to Jesus Christ in faith and who continue in the faith by letting themselves be led by the Spirit of Christ. Nevertheless, self-professed Christians can have no assurance of inheriting the kingdom of God if they live primarily in conformity to sin operating in the flesh. This includes engaging in homosexual practice repetitively and without repentance.

Rev. Keller could have said something along the lines of the following:

Yes, homosexual practice is a sin. Having sex with a person of the same sex dishonors or degrades the participants because it treats as a complement to one's own sex a sexual same rather than a sexual other. It falsely implies that the participant's sex or gender is only half intact in relation to one's own sex. God created and designed "male and female" for sexual pairing. It is on the basis of a foundation of male-female complementarity that one can maintain logically prohibitions of incest (a violation of the principle of too much embodied sameness, not enough complementary otherness) and polyamory (a violation of the principle of two established by the requisite two genders, male and female).

Will homosexual practice send a person to hell? Yes, along with any other sin since no one is good enough to merit a place in God's kingdom and any sin causes

one to fall short of God's glory. Will it send a self-professed believer to hell? Yes, because it is a mark of unbelief. Living unrepentantly in homosexual practice or other patterns of egregious immorality (adultery, incest, robbery, extortion, and the like) are signs of a life not lived by faith, of claiming that Jesus is Lord but actually living as if sin, not Jesus, is one's lord.

A small sampling of some relevant Scripture texts:

“If your right eye threatens your downfall, pluck it out and cast it from you. For it is better for you that one of your members be lost and not your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand threatens your downfall, cut it off and cast it from you. For it is better for you that one of your members be lost and not your whole body depart to hell” (Matt 5:29-30 [in a context having to do with sexual sin]).

“From their fruits you will know them.... Every tree that does not make good fruit is being cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, from their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven but (rather) the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, ...’ and then I will declare to them publicly, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me you who do the work of lawlessness.’ So everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be compared to a foolish man who built his house on the sand.” (Matt 7:16-27).

“I am the true vine and my Father is the one who works the soil. Every branch in me that is not bearing fruit he takes away and every one that is bearing fruit he prunes in order that it may be bearing (even) more fruit.... Remain in me and I in you.... If anyone does not remain in me he is thrown out like the branch and dries up and they gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned” (John 15:1-6).

“So then, brothers (and sisters), we are debtors not to the flesh, (that is,) to live in conformity to the flesh. For, if you continue to live in conformity to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by (means of) the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these (very ones) are sons (and daughters) of God” (Rom 8:12-14).

“If you are being led by the Spirit you are not under (the jurisdiction of) the law. Now the works of the flesh are apparent, which are (of the following sort): sexual immorality (*porneia*), sexual impurity (*akatharsia*), licentiousness (*aselgeia*), idolatry ... and the things like these, about which I am telling you beforehand [i.e., before God's day of judgment], just as I told you beforehand [i.e., when I was personally with you] that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:18-21).

“Do not be deceiving yourselves: God is not to be mocked, for whatever a person sows, this also he (or she) will reap, because the one who sows to his (or her) own flesh will, from the flesh, reap (a harvest of) destruction; but the one who sows to the Spirit will, from the Spirit, reap (a harvest of) eternal life. And let us not be bad in doing what is good for in due time we will reap (our harvest), if we do not slack off” (Gal 6:7-9).

“Sexual immorality (*porneia*) and sexual impurity (*akatharsia*) of any kind ... must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.... Know this indeed, that every sexually immoral person (*pornos*) or sexually impure person (*akathartos*) ... has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming on the children of disobedience” (Eph 5:3-6).

“For you know what instructions we gave to you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God: your holiness [or: sanctification], that you abstain from sexual immorality (*porneia*), ... because the Lord is an avenger concerning all these things, just as also we told you before and were charging (you before God). For God did not call us to sexual impurity (*akatharsia*) but in holiness [or: sanctification]. For that very reason the one who rejects (this instruction) rejects not a human being but God who gives the Holy Spirit to you” (1 Thess 4:2-8).

“For if we keep on sinning willfully [or: deliberately, intentionally] after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there is no longer left a sacrifice for sins but a fearful prospect [or: expectation] of judgment and a raging fire that is about to consume the adversaries. Anyone who set aside the law of Moses “dies” without mercy “on (the testimony of) two or three witnesses” [Deut 17:6]. How much worse punishment [or: vengeance, retribution] do you think will be deserved by the one who trampled under foot the Son of God and regarded as unholy [or: profane; literally: common, ordinary] the blood of the covenant by which he was made holy [or: sanctified] and insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Heb 10:26-27, 29).

“What is the benefit, my brothers, if someone says that he has faith but (that same someone) does not have works? His faith cannot save him, can it? ... Faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself.... I will show you my faith from my works. Do you believe that God is one? You do well. And the demons believe—and shudder.... Faith apart from works is barren.... You see that [in the case of Abraham] faith works together with his works and (that) from the works faith was brought to completion.... For as indeed the body without spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead” (James 2:14-26).

“If we say that we have partnership with him and are walking in darkness, we lie and do not have the truth; but if we are walking in the light as he himself is in the light we have partnership with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.... The one who says, ‘I have come to know him,’ and is not keeping his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.... By this we know that we are in him: The one who says that he remains in him ought—just as that one (Jesus) walked—also himself to walk like this” (1 John 1:6-7; 2:3-6).

“[The risen Christ says:] ‘To ... the church in Pergamum.... You did not deny your faith even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed among you.... But I have against you a few things, that you have there (some) holding to the teaching of Balaam [i.e., the Nicolaitans], ... [who teach you] to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality.... So repent. But if (you do) not, I am coming to you quickly and I will make war with them with the sword of my mouth.... To the one who conquers I will give to him (some) of the manna that has been kept hidden and I will give to him a white stone....’” (Rev 2:12-17).

Postscript – Sept. 16, 2012

A few days after posting this online I found out a number of things.

1. The Veritas interview occurred much earlier than I thought, in 2008. Long before the posting on YouTube this posting appeared at <http://vimeo.com/9166506>. The remarks on homosexuality start at the 51 minute mark.

2. Rev. Tim Bayly had already produced a transcript back in 2010 (I smoothed out the verbal stumbles; Bayly did not). I wish I had known that; it would have saved me a bit of time.

<http://baylyblog.com/blog/2010/04/veritas-forums-tim-keller-sodomy-its-not-good-human-flourishing>.

Rev. Bayly has a nice comment:

Compare a run-of-the-mill Veritas Forum talk and you'd have a hard time finding the Apostle Paul's Apostolic witness, courage, and authority. I certainly didn't hear it when Veritas came here to Indiana University. But here's another example in the form of a transcript of Tim Keller being interviewed as part of the Veritas Forum at Columbia University. The subject is sodomy--that darling of every academic looking for some lower cause through which to stake his claim to moral enlightenment. Note carefully what is said as well as how it's said. As always, the only true sinner is that judgmental Christian who is not as enlightened in the way he presents the Gospel as our champion....

What the Academy needs today is men who are fearless in proclaiming sin, righteousness, and the coming judgment in the context of the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ to desperate sinners like us. And these men should normally be those who are followers of Jesus Christ who work on campus; His slaves who can't help but be faithful in speaking of His holiness and mercy in their classrooms, faculty offices, faculty senate meetings, on the walkways from classroom building to classroom building, and so on.

3. Rev. Keller's remarks do not appear to have been accidental or mistaken but represent settled conviction. One online post (<http://theothercriminal.com/2011/02/07/tim-keller-on-homosexuality/>) reports: "In *The Reason for God* discussion DVD [2010?], in which Tim Keller sits down with six skeptics to ask honest questions about Christianity, one participant asks, "What is the Christian view of homosexuality?" Rev. Keller responds:

There are three things that Christians say that I think have to do with homosexuality:

First of all, the Good Samaritan parable and the very model of Jesus dying for people who opposed him means that all Christians are duty-bound to love and serve their neighbors, regardless of their beliefs, regardless of them being people of other faiths [or] other views of sexuality. We are supposed to make this city a great place for everybody to live in regardless of their beliefs. That's important. In other words we have to love people regardless of where they are on that spectrum of belief.

Secondly, the gospel of Christianity, which is that you're saved not by good doctrine, not by good works, but by sheer, unmerited grace, pulls out the self-righteousness and superiority that tends to go along with religious belief, which has actually made a lot of gay people suffer. A lot of people

have suffered out of that kind of [self-righteous] attitude, which the gospel takes away from us. And that is good, for a lot of gay people.

Thirdly, when the Bible tells us something about how we should live, like sex, money, power, it always does it like this: it says, God created us, and therefore God in his Word in the Bible is giving you directions for how you should live according to your own design. It's not busywork. It's like when the owner's manual comes to a car and says something like, "Change the oil every so many thousand miles," it's not busywork, it's saying that's how the car was designed, [and] if you violate that you will actually hurt the car. So the Bible does say sex is for a man and a woman inside marriage to nurture love and commitment in a long term permanent relationship of marriage. Which means polygamy, it means sex outside of marriage, it means homosexuality are considered violations of God's will, but also violations of our own design. So the Bible's actually saying you're missing out if you do those things. So the Christian view of homosexuality is you're going against your own design and you're actually missing out on God's best for you.

Of particular note is this remark: "So the Christian view of homosexuality is you're going against your own design and you're actually missing out on God's best for you." This sounds just like the "human flourishing" remark in the video. Contrary to what Rev. Keller seems to suggest, self-professed Christians who are actively and unrepentantly living sexually immoral lives of an egregious sort are not merely "missing out on God's best." They face cataclysmic judgment.

More dodgy and convoluted comments from Rev. Keller on homosexual practice appeared in a Fox News interview a year-and-a-half ago: http://freedomtorch.com/forums/topic/4690/-/view/post_id/43493:

Lauren Green: As a church, how should we as Christians and how should the church view gay rights and gay marriage?

Tim Keller: Ha! I would definitely say this is time to come to a conclusion! (Laughter).

I would definitely say... a thoughtful Christian biblical response doesn't fit into any of the existing categories out there. It's not a simple matter of saying there should be no moral differentiation between any kind of sexual activity. Christians can't go there. They can't say, "No, it doesn't matter." It's also true however, that this is a country where we're supposed to love our neighbor. This is a country where a Christian is supposed to care about a just society for ALL our neighbors whether they believe like we do or not. And that's gotta mean our gay neighbor.

And I would say people in the more conservative movement don't really want to talk too much about that because they're very upset because they feel like the gay agenda is too anti-Christian and too anti-religious.

So I would say – the reason it's good to end on this question is – it's not something, the way forward, I don't see spelled out anywhere in public. I don't see anybody in public taking all the Biblical concerns about justice and mercy in that area and speaking about them. But I'm certainly not going to get started.

Just to let you know I don't really think the current options out there – about what we should do – are really the best ones from a Christian standpoint.

Lauren Green: Maybe that'll be for the next one (i.e. next time we do this).

Tim: Uh... I don't know about that! (Laughter). Maybe we should have a different interviewer – and a different answerer for that one!

For a pastor who has no trouble talking about greed and social justice issues, Rev. Keller's refusal to discuss a Christian position on "gay rights and gay marriage," one of the central moral issues of our day, is both striking and disturbing.

4. Rev. Keller apparently had a brother who lived a homosexual life and died of AIDS after returning to the Christian faith. Has this experience contributed to Rev. Keller's confused and confusing message on homosexual practice? We should treat persons with homosexual attractions and even behavior with humanity and compassion. We must speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15) but, for the sake of the offender, we cannot be loving while withholding the truth.