

I Hear You

On Sunday, Jeff did an interview sermon with Jamie Burier, who described his life's journey as a transgender person.

1. Warm-up Question: Jeff began Sunday's sermon with a "hilarious" joke about someone who halted his wedding because he discovered his bride was missing a toe. He was "lack-toes-intolerant." We humans can discover a million different ways to be intolerant. What is one of the silliest prejudices you've ever had or witnessed. (For now, let's keep it light. For example, prejudice against "Fanilows" or prejudice against New England Patriots, etc.)
2. Who is the first transgender person you ever met? Before you met that person, what was your attitude toward transgender people? How did knowing that person affect you?
3. Read Jeremiah 1:4-8. Do you think God has a life-plan for each of us before we're born? If so, how detailed is the plan? Can we accept it or reject it? And what do you think God's plan is for you?
4. Read Psalm 139:13-18. Jamie selected this passage – and the Jeremiah passage we just looked at – for us to read on Sunday.
 - a. What word or phrase in this passage most grabs your attention? What is it about that word or phrase that grabs you?
 - b. When a transgender person reads this passage, what do you think they hear?
5. Jamie told how already at age 4 he had a deep sense that he was a boy. From that age until he was a young adult, he repeatedly asked God to magically make him into a male. He felt at home in boys' clothes and like an alien in girls' clothes. He loved to play the way boys stereotypically do and disliked playing the way girls stereotypically do. What does this tell us about gender identity and where it comes from?
6. Jamie went through a period where he tried to live into the girly girl "ideal" as a way of pleasing his family and friends. He says it made him miserable – to the point he began cutting himself. What does this tell us about what happens to our soul when we try to be something we're not? Have you ever tried to be something you're not? What happened?
7. Suppose someone told you that, for the rest of your life, you must live as the opposite of your gender. In other words, if you're a man, you must live as a woman or vice versa. How do you think that would affect you?
8. While struggling to resist his gender identity, Jamie says he often had angry conversations with God. He also knew intuitively that God loved him no matter

- what. As a result, he was able to maintain a relationship with God even in the depths of his struggle. Do you ever allow yourself to express anger at God? Do you find it helps or hurts your relationship with God?
9. Since coming out to his little sister, she has been Jamie's biggest fan. His older sister not so much. His Dad has slowly come around. His Mom and step-Dad still struggle. Think about the person in your nuclear family that you are closest to – a spouse, sibling, parent, or child. Now imagine that person told you they were transgender and intended to transition. How do you think you would react? What would be your first, most-powerful emotion? What would you be happy about? What would be the hardest thing for you?
 10. When he was struggling and resisting his gender identity, Jamie says God kept randomly bringing transgender people into his life. Looking back, he sees the hand of God in that. He sees God lovingly bringing these people into his life as role models to encourage him along the way. Tell us about a time when God has used people and circumstances to gently guide you in a direction you needed to go.
 11. How would you respond to someone who has biblical questions or issues with transgender people? What are some biblical reasons to affirm transgender people?
 12. Read I Corinthians 15:35-41 and 50-54. How might this passage be helpful to someone who is struggling with whether to transition their gender?
 13. Have you ever questioned your gender identity?
 14. Suppose someone struggling with their gender identity came to you and asked for spiritual and personal advice. What kinds of things would you say to them?

Family Reunion Sunday, Sept. 20, 11:00 am. Wear a mask and socially distance. BYO lawn chair or blanket. Extra chairs provided. We'll still livestream for any who can't be there.