

THE ETHICS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

<http://erlc.com/equipaustin>

The Gospel and Same-Sex Marriage:
Equipping the Church for a Post-Marriage Culture



equip

July 29th, 2015

6:30-7:00PM | SPBC DOORS OPEN | GATHERING & INTRODUCTIONS

7:00-7:20PM | WELCOME AND WORSHIP |
PHILLIP BETHANCOURT, JIM RICHARDS, AND AUSTIN STONE WORSHIP

7:20-7:55PM | MARRIAGE ON THE LINE: PREPARING YOUR CHURCH FOR A SAME-SEX
MARRIAGE CULTURE | RUSSELL MOORE

7:55-8:00PM | VIDEO - SEX IS BETTER

8:00-8:20PM | PRACTICAL STEPS FOR CHURCH-BASED SAME-SEX ATTRACTION
MINISTRY | MIKE GOEKE

8:20-8:23PM | VIDEO: HOW DO YOU SHOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST TO SAME-SEX
ATTRACTED LOST FRIENDS? | SAM ALLBERRY

8:23-9:02PM | SECRET THOUGHTS OF AN UNLIKELY CONVERT | AN INTERVIEW WITH
ROSARIA BUTTERFIELD

9:02-9:10PM | VIDEO: RESPONDING TO COMMON OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLE'S
TEACHING ON HOMOSEXUALITY | ANDREW WALKER

9:10-9:25PM | HOW DOES THE GOSPEL EQUIP CHRISTIANS WHO STRUGGLE WITH
SAME-SEX ATTRACTION? | JACKIE HILL-PERRY

9:25-9:35PM | VIDEO: MARRIAGE IS OUR FUTURE | ALLIANCE DEFENDING FREEDOM

NOTES

HOLY SCRIPTURE & SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

By Pastor Dave Brown

How did society arrive at the idea of same-sex marriage (SSM)? ¹

- Over two millennia the idea for SS relationships was present, even in biblical OT history, but marriage has always been confined to one man and one woman. No nation has (or logically can) sustained itself that emphasizes homosexuality.
- Typically the view was theological and not always academic, though growing interpretations in both.
- Domino effect of cultural morals... ultimately, sinfulness of humanity
 - sex as non-covenantal but recreational (contrast Genesis 2:24; 1Corinthians 6:15-17)
 - sex as non-reproductive but self-ending (contrast Genesis 1:28; Malachi 2:15)
 - marriage minimized due to self-idealization/selfish fulfillment (contrast Ephesians 5:32)
 - cohabitation
 - divorce (“no-fault”)
- American view of “Progress” & “Enlightenment”. American perspective of not wanting to be on wrong side of history.
- American blurred view of “rights” & “freedom”. Cultural assumption that liberty = no boundaries.
- American tolerance and pluralism.
- American perspective of “love” - #lovewins. Cultural assumption that sex = love; love is self-affirming and not self-denying.
- The “slippery slope”

What is the actual Supreme Court ruling? ²

- 2 issues
 - 1. Does the 14th Amendment require a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex?
 - 2. Does the 14th Amendment require a state to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out of state.
 - The Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision authored by Justice Kennedy, held that the Equal Protection Clause requires a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex and to recognize a same-sex marriage entered into lawfully in another state. In so holding, the Supreme Court struck down the state constitutional amendments of Michigan, Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee that defined marriage as between one man and one woman. The decision redefines marriage for the entire country to include same-sex couples.
 - Quote: “The right to marry is a fundamental right inherent in the liberty of the person, and under the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment couples of the same-sex may not be deprived of that right and that liberty. Same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry.”
 - Quote: “Finally, it must be emphasized that religions, and those who adhere to religious doctrines, may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned. The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths, and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered.”

¹ Adapted from <http://erlc.com/article/the-roots-of-marriages-redefinition-how-we-got-where-we-are-today>

² Adapted from <http://erlc.com/article/explainer-what-you-should-know-about-the-supreme-court-same-sex-marriage-ru>

What is the biblical perspective?

Homosexuality and the World

- Genetic:
So, those with SSA/SSO³ look at the world, they say “I was born this way. God didn’t make a mistake”
- Normal
Those with SSA/SSO act on feelings and preferred desires saying, “I can love whomever I want.”
DSM 1973
 - o The move toward the official acceptance of homosexuality in modern American society started in 1973 when the American Psychological Association removed homosexuality from its list of psychological diseases in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. The wake of this decision has seen tidal waves and in the past decade a tsunami of influence in culture to normalize homosexuality. SSM is now law of USA (Supreme Court 2015).
- Christian
Ironically, today’s post-modern society has drawn a new circle in combining homosexuality and its behaviors as in step with the Christian faith.
 - o It is said that Jesus never judges/condemns homosexuality (argument from silence).
 - However, this is a weak argument considering Jesus did not directly speak about bestiality or pedophilia...
 - Further, Jesus does lift up the Biblical ideal of marriage as a man & woman as the creation/normal design (referencing Genesis 2:24 – Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-8).
 - o It is said the Bible has been misinterpreted/socialized.
 - Scholars offer highly creative speculation and attempting theological gymnastics at best & simply blatantly disregarding Scripture & mocking God at worse. No religious denomination is sustained or statistically growing who has adopted such views.

Homosexuality and the Word (Scripture)

- Genetic
The Bible would not contradict a confession that homosexuality is an internal preference or if science found a “gay-gene”. The Bible still would affirm homosexuality as sin and along with every other sin, saying that our hearts are foolish, desperately wicked, evil, suppressing truth and innately sinful (Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:19; Romans 1:19, 3:23, 5:19).

Dr. Sam Williams says of nature vs. nurture⁴

“there may be *some biological contributions in some persons* would not be surprising and does seem consistent with the research. The recognition that biology may play a role need not be resisted by Christians since God has created us as embodied souls, psychosomatic beings, and all things, including our bodies and brains and genes, have been infected by sin. In addition, that something such as the body or the brain is influential, or even formative, does not mean it is morally or spiritually determinative. It seems reasonable to accept, and clearly consistent with Scripture, that bodies and brains and genes along with parents and peers and cultures all play influential or formative roles in our lives. But that doesn’t mean they are determinative.”

- Normal
Again, sin is sin. The truth is that all of our sex lives – every look, feel, fantasy, touch, thought will be judged before a holy God. The Bible presents a picture where sexual deviation & immorality is characteristic of us all (Rom 1:26-27; 1Cor 6:9-20; Gal 5:19-21; 1Thess 4:3-8).

³ Same-sex Attraction (SSA), Same-sex Orientation (SSO).

⁴ See Dr. Sam Williams lecture “A Christian Psychology of and Response to Homosexuality” <http://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/resources/christian-psychology-of-and-response-to-homosexuality>

- Christian

To be a Christian means to be a follower of Christ; one who loves God, lives as Christ and lessens the control of sin in their life. A person cannot remain in a pattern of sin and remain in Christ at the same time. This does not mean that a Christian does not sin but it means they are willing to give up what takes them away from the holiness of God.

1John 2:3-6, 3:4-6 3 This is how we are sure that we have come to know Him: by keeping His commands. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," without keeping His commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly in him the love of God is perfected. This is how we know we are in Him: 6 the one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked. ... 4 Everyone who commits sin also breaks the law; sin is the breaking of law. 5 You know that He was revealed so that He might take away sins, and there is no sin in Him. 6 Everyone who remains in Him does not sin; everyone who sins has not seen Him or known Him.

What does Scripture further say about homosexuality? ⁵

Genesis 18 Abraham intercedes for Sodom "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city? (v.23-24) Suppose 45... Suppose 40...20... 10?

Entire city destroyed for ongoing homosexual practice (Sin of Sodom & Gomorrah is mentioned numerous times. See Isa 1:9-10, 3:9, 13:19; Jer 23:14, 39:18, 50:40; Lamentations 4:6; Ezekiel 16:46-56; Amos 4:11; Zeph 2:9; Matt 10:15, 11:23-24; Luke 10:12, 17:29; Romans 9:29; 2Pet 2:6; Jude 7; Rev 11:8).

Genesis 19:4-11 Men of Sodom surround Lot's house to have sexual relations with Lot's male visitors.

- Revisionists scholars have proposed that Sodom's sin was gang rape (if so then God is unjust in his judgment since the action never actually occurred).
- Another proposition is that Sodom's sin was inhospitality (To know them not sexually but cordially.) Yet, context implies the former—see 18:32 that God could not find 10 righteous people in the entire city before this even and then also 19:8 as Lot's unfortunate response offering his daughters instead of the male guests; and the fact his life was threatened in 19:9. Further, if Lot was responsible for the sin of inhospitality then why was his life spared while the others judged? And why was the entire city destroyed for a sin in which they had no part?

Leviticus 18:22/20:13 "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination....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."

Romans 1:26-27 "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature 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."

1Corinthians 6:9-10 "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, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."

1Timothy 1:9-10 "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, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine"

Jude 1:7 "just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire."

⁵ See also: <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/bible-same-sex-marriage-6-wrong-trajectories>

Further, in the Gospels, Jesus implicitly condemns homosexuality in his affirmation of the creation/Genesis design (cf. Matthew 19:4-6).

God's creation/Genesis for marriage

Genesis 2:24 is the essential verse defining marriage in the Bible. It is quoted 4 times: Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-8; 1Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 5:31) and is alluded to indirectly numerous other times. From this passage flows a working definition of marriage.

- Marriage is an earthly relationship pointing to an eternal reality (Matthew 22:20; Ephesians 5:31-32)
- What you say about and how you live out marriage & family represents your beliefs about God and His relationship with the church.
- Marriage is a foundational stewardship for creation (Genesis 1:27-28). It provides the safe environment for pro-creation and nurture of individuals in society. It is personal, relational and communal.
- Marriage is heterosexual (Leviticus 18:22-23/20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1Corinthians 6:9-11; 1Timothy 1:9-10; Jude 1:6-7). It is for “a man and his wife”. The natural sense of relationships and pro-creation validate heterosexuality. Marriage is not reduced merely to sexual intimacy. It's a foundational institution pointing to a greater reality of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32).
- Marriage is exclusive. “A man will leave father and mother and be united to wife”.
 - Marriage is exclusive in that of leaving parents. This is not so much location (geography) as it refers to loyalty in a new relationship.
 - Marriage is also exclusive in terms of monogamous (not polygamous) partners for life (Deuteronomy 17:17; Leviticus 18:18). God expects faithfulness in His worshipers, not adulterous idolaters.
- Marriage is covenantal and life-long (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:6; 1Corinthians 7:10-16). Its union is “*bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh...shall hold fast... one flesh*”. The permanence of marriage provides the security and hopefulness of relationships. It is more than a human contract but a divine covenant. Likewise, God is faithful in His covenant.
- Marriage is complementarian. Man and woman are interdependent with equal value but independent with different roles assigned in the family. The biblical ideas of “*headship*” and “*helper*” are significant here. Further, families are to reflect the love, sacrifice, service and submission that Jesus had unto the Lord God, thereby modeling the gospel unto the world.

Cultural Discussions

⇒ Does same-sex marriage really affect society or even Christians?

The short answer is yes. Accepting such a re-definition of marriage will radically alter how society views marriage and the expectations placed upon Christians and their marriages. To illustrate: “If the definition of a Ph.D in History were altered to include anyone who watched a documentary on the History Channel, that affects those with a Ph.D in History, even though nothing has been done to their degree specifically.” (J.D. Greear) Further, numerous secular studies have shown that no nation or society has been able to flourish after 3 generations once “strict marital monogamy” was abandoned as the standard (Wayne Grudem, Politics According to the Bible, pp.216-217).

⇒ Is homosexuality a civil rights issue? ⁶

States regulate marriage in multiple ways: age limits, exclusion of marrying blood relatives and first cousins; exclusion of marrying multiple partners along with exclusion of marrying non-human partners. Further, some states even restrict marriage of people suffering from various venereal diseases. Therefore, homosexuals are not the only people to be excluded from the right to marriage. This does not mean each of these scenarios are equivalent but simply illustrating that marriage has specific regulation and definition for good reason. If the government must redefine and recognize marriage based on the sole basis of individualism, then upon what criteria does it end? ⁷ Can a person marry multiple partners because they are all in love? Can an adult romance and marry a minor because of personal preference? Can you discern the progression of such a radical redefinition of a sacred institution?

⇒ Is homosexuality a genetic predisposition?

While there is no science to prove this, even if it could it would still not make it morally acceptable. A genetic predisposition toward an action can never be the proper basis for legitimizing such a behavior. To give but one example: a male with a genetic glandular condition resulting in the production of increased testosterone and thus a higher than normal sex drive, could not appeal to his genetic condition to validate the morality of rape, incest or pedophilia.

People may experience same-sex attraction at varying levels or have a same-sex orientation (predominant attraction) without having a gay or lesbian identity (adoption of lifestyle and moral acceptance of behavior). In other words, a person may have an attraction or even an orientation toward homosexuality but not act on it.

⇒ What is the church's responsibility to homosexuals?

Christians must love homosexuals more than homosexuals love homosexuality. Jesus' gospel to transform sinners and the Great Commission remind us to love all sinners alike. No one is beyond the grace and salvation of God. A church that holds signs of hatred or instigates hostility is far removed from the God who sent His only Son to die on a cross to rescue sinners. There is no room for a Christian to treat anyone with disrespect or demeaning attitudes or actions.

Christians must speak the truth in love. The secular option of tolerance equates personhood with lifestyle practices and mandates full acceptance of behaviors/views. The proposed secular option of intolerance equates disagreement with discrimination and is viewed as prejudice rather than principled. But Christians must speak of a third option—speaking the truth in love; differentiating personhood with practice, understanding disagreement does not negate compassion. This is the biblical option and the Christian responsibility. This option must come to the forefront if there is to be a gospel revival among the homosexual community and among secular society.

Al Mohler says⁸, "As Christians, we are charged with the difficult task of compassionate truth-telling... [it] requires the church to speak from its deepest convictions while demonstrating the love of Christ... Christians must resist the temptation to speak the truth in a manner that falls short of the good, the beautiful and the true. We betray the truth when we speak of it with an ugly spirit, or attach it to base arguments or mean-spirited impulses."

Christians must also recognize the secular world does not recognize the authority and relevance of divine revelation in Scripture. The defense of heterosexual marriage must indeed start with the God-ordained order and point people to His goodness and grace. However, Christians must also learn ways to communicate and contextualize these truths to unbelievers so they can see God's design.

⁶ See also "Gay Is Not The New Black": <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2015/06/30/gay-is-not-the-new-black-says-texas-pastor/>; <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/gay-is-not-the-new-black>; http://townhall.com/columnists/michaelbrown/2012/05/22/why_gay_is_not_the_new_black/page/full;

⁷ Chief Justice Supreme Court, John Roberts dissenting view accessed: http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/14pdf/14-556_3204.pdf

⁸ Sex and the Supremacy of Christ, ed. John Piper. Chapter 5 p.108, Al Mohler "Homosexual Marriage as a Challenge to the Church: Biblical and Cultural Reflections"

In the end, God has not called the Church to win arguments or control the government but to win souls and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. We could potentially win the war politically, culturally, legally, sociologically and constitutionally but still lose the war spiritually and theologically.

Focus on Jesus Christ and the gospel

Do we want homosexuals to find heterosexuality? Yes but merely becoming heterosexual is not the same thing as salvation. We also want liars to be truth-tellers, adulterers to be faithful spouses, greedy to be generous, gluttons to learn discipline, prideful to be humble.

Homosexuality is not the central emphasis in Scripture nor is it with Jesus' teachings. Both address the topic but in such that it's only part of our overall identity for a follower of God. Such an identity and lifestyle must go beyond moral and external to internal heart change – becoming a new creation, born anew by the gospel.

- External behavioral change only produces religious nuts
- Internal heart change produces spiritual fruit

The gospel is our only hope for all sin.

The gospel has the power over EVERY sin. We must speak the beautiful truth that Jesus can cleanse, sanctify and justify every sinner.

“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” (1Cor 6:11)

“And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit let us also walk by the Spirit.” Galatians 5:24-25

Summary: A Christian's practical response to unbelievers, or specifically the homosexual community

1. Be a friend in adversity; especially regardless of a person's lifestyle.
 - Proverbs 17:17 “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”
2. Listen to their story not just for their sake but for your own. Listening does not equal submitting or agreeing to the person's perspective. Listening shows compassion and the love of Jesus. Listening helps to overcome stereotypes on both sides.
 - Proverbs 10:19-20 “When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent. The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is of little worth.”
3. Share the gospel repeatedly. The gospel is good news for all sinners.
 - John 4:29 “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”
4. Speak the truth – being candid about differences without arrogance or ugliness. A Christian witness should be winsome.
 - Proverbs 15:23 “To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is.”
 - Ephesians 4:15 “speaking truth in love”
5. Speak up for the person if/when they are being bullied. Everyone is made in God's image and should retain such dignity. Christian's must lead the way.
 - Proverbs 31:8 “Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.”
6. Strengthen your own family and church relationships.
 - Matthew 7:5; Ephesians 5 (5:1-16)
7. Pray for God's glory and salvation to be made known to all. The devil wants to delude & destroy lives but Jesus wants to deliver & save lives.
 - Colossians 1:20 “through Christ, reconciling to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”