

Love & Homosexuality

There is an issue in our culture that is constantly in the spotlight, daily in your face, inescapable. Virtually every news cycle seems to have a story about this subject. The subject is homosexuality. Here are a few story-lines over the last decade.

-In 2014 the Boy Scouts of America announced that their ranks are now open to openly gay scouts.

-In 2011 the U.S. military adopted an “open gay” policy

-In 2013 the Illinois legislature voted to legalize marriage for same-sex couples & Gov. Quinn said he couldn’t wait to sign the bill [and he did]

-The Catholic Church continues to reel over the many abuses and cover ups of their priests, many involving homosexual behaviors with minors.

-Music star Taylor Swift touted “Tennessee” values 2 weeks ago as she encouraged voters to vote against Senate candidate Marsha Blackburn because she was not pro LBGYQT rights, against gay marriage and didn’t want businesses to have the right to refuse service based on religious reasons.

-Colorado just elected the first openly gay governor.

-We just had a family we know in Batavia proudly announce their daughter was gay on Facebook.

Other examples of the issue being in the news? Families/Friends?

This shows the magnitude of this issue..... so while we didn’t get a Blue Wave/Tsunami on election Tuesday this year. Over the past few decades we have been impacted by a pro-gay Tsunami that has swept over our country. The pro-gay perspective appears to be dominant.

Today in this class we’re going to look at 3 things:

-The reality of homosexuality in our culture –

-Next, we’re going to interact with the biblical teaching.

-Lastly, we’re going to think about how to respond to this issue.

Here are a few more stats and then we'll dive into the bible:
Gallup poll – actual % of LBGYQT 2012 – 3.5, 2018 – 4.5
Public perception is that these numbers are well over 20%

Let's begin the biblical teaching portion with an outline that comes from an interview on the *Peers Morgan Show* on CNN. He wanted to interview some people about the issue of bigotry & the bible, including a theologian named Scott Brown. Morgan said, "Can you point to a single public utterance from Jesus Christ about gay people or about the gay lifestyle?" {Gotcha!}

And I think Morgan and others were surprised when the theologian said, "I'll give you 3 – in Mt. 5 Jesus said he didn't come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. He takes the sexual morals of the Law and affirms them"

#2 in Mt. 15 he says all sexual acts committed outside of marriage defile a human being.

#3 in Mt. 19 Jesus defines marriage [as God intended it] as a union between one man and one woman for life.

And then later he said, "*Jesus was a first century Jew, so of course he would reinforce these things.*"

Well, Morgan was stunned – Apparently Jesus had a lot to say about this issue of homosexuality [indirectly, but clearly].

So to begin our bible survey this morning, let's look at each of those 3 Scriptures cited by Professor Brown in **the Gospel of Matthew**.

[First let's open our bibles to Mt. 5]

This is from Jesus' famous "Sermon on the Mount" –**[Mt. 5:17-20][Read]**

As you can see from his words, Jesus didn't come to flush the OT down the drain. He didn't come to abolish it or make fun of it as something no longer holding value. No he affirms the Law & the Prophets as relevant,

representing God's character & rule, as something to be respected. But His main point is that He came to **fulfill** them....

Jesus is saying in no uncertain terms that, "He is the fulfillment of the OT." Therefore, we no longer sacrifice animals [Jesus is the once for all sacrifice]. And we no longer have a ceremonial approach to God [we now come to God thru our mediator, Jesus Christ, God's Son].

Fair enough – but what about the moral framework of the OT?...

Are the 10 commandments passé? [look at v. 18]

Jesus later affirms in Mt. 22 that the great commandment is – *to love God w/ all your heart, mind, soul & strength [and the 2nd is like it...]* *love your neighbor as yourself.*

This sums up the 10 commandments. And then here in **Mt. 5** we see Jesus teaching against murder and going deeper to talk about hate. He then teaches against adultery and goes deeper to talk about lust. So while the moral law has been ***fulfilled by Christ***, the spirit of the Law should still be ***followed by believers***. It reflects God's character and holds authority until God's kingdom is consummated and we dwell in His presence forever.

Until then, the Kingdom of God demands obedience to the teachings of King Jesus – and His teaching is consistent with the OT.

So what the OT Law says about homosexuality - **that's Jesus' view!**

That said, let me read a few verses from the OT Law in Leviticus....

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

Leviticus 20:13 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.

Here we see God's disposition toward the practice of homosexuality – it's an abomination! Add the story of Sodom & Gomorrah to the mix and you have clear teaching about this *sin* in the OT Law.

So what did Jesus think about homosexuality? It was an abomination!

As the fulfiller of the Law, this would have been His position.

The 2nd thing Jesus said about this subject is in Mt. 15 – [vv. 10-20]

Lots of things in your heart that can defile you... **evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft**... the Greek word here for “sexual immorality” is **porneia**.

The ESV translates it *sexual immorality* – other translations say “*fornications*.” You’ll notice that adultery has already been mentioned. Porneia, on the other hand, refers to a *broad range* of sexual sins – from prostitution to premarital sex to homosexuality. **Anything outside of marriage! And where does this sin, this defilement come from?** It comes from within... it comes from the **heart**. Jesus was trying to show them that what they really need is a **new heart!**
Something we all need and only God can give

The 3rd and final passage we’ll consider in Matthew is **ch. 19** – this is Jesus teaching on divorce. Jesus was not an easy divorce kind of a guy. That said, he lifts up God’s intended will for marriage in these verses....

[look at Mt. 19-3-6][read]

Do you see what Jesus does? He goes back to Genesis. He goes back to creation and the garden---back to Adam & Eve to show God’s intention for them to be one and to stay one. And as you look at those verses in **Gen. 1 & 2** you can see that God’s creation was male & female – you can see that marriage was ordained for a man and his wife to be united. Jesus adds, “*What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate*” So the clear teaching of the law is marriage designed for **Adam & Eve**, not **Adam & Steve** not **Eve & Eva**... Adam & Eve.

Sexuality outside of those parameters is a sin and against God’s created order.... Socially, Spiritually, Anatomically. This is why Paul talks about **natural** and **unnatural** relations in **Rom. 1:18-27**}

So not only is the practice of homosexuality rebellious & sinful, it's also unnatural – it goes against God's created order for males & females & marriage [or godly singleness if that is what God has called you to][PAUSE]

But it's only fair to point out all the sins that are listed here in **Romans 1** – describing godless pagans. He'll go after the religious Jews in ch. 2, but in **Romans 1:28ff** Paul writes this... [vv. 28-32][read]

Many examples of rebellion against God in this passage and they all flow from the sin nature [**Romans 3:9-23**]

So if you were to ask me what lies at the heart of homosexuality I don't think choice or culture are the only factors. We are all born with a sin nature, defective hearts *and that makes any sin possible*.

I know a pastor who told me that his son had a sinful inclination toward lying. His proclivity to sin took that form & shape. And I think it could be that a weakness for lying was in his sin nature from birth.

That said, I think there are other factors.... a sexual encounter in childhood, "progressive" parenting. Society & schools enter this moral realm w/ their own agendas... including teaching kids that homosexuality is normative, morally right, & experimentation is OK. The middle school in Batavia has taught this in their sex education classes. Public libraries, websites, organizations get into the act by providing all kinds of materials to all kinds of ages. And the list of enablers goes on..

So from the sin **nature** to a legion of influences, the practice of homosexuality is a sad reality in our world, just as it was in the ancient world – Sodom & Gomorrah [all the men came to the door]

So what is our response to all this? To Same-Sex Marriage, to Societal influences, to a Friends or Neighbors or Family members....

A hands off policy? It's not for me to judge?

What about Adoption, church membership, practicing gay pastors?

But Jesus said, “whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments & teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven”

So what are we to do? First of all I’d say brace yourself for persecution. If you hold to a Biblical/ Christian worldview you are not going to be in step w/ the direction of this world on this issue.

I heard a political prediction that by 2020 every state in our nation will legalize marijuana and same-sex marriage.....

If you’re not in step w/ that you’re going to be marginalized and pressured to conform. And only a God-given spiritual awakening can reverse the course. If not, this generation and certainly the next generation of Christians could be in for some trials & tribulations.

2 Timothy 3:12-14 ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom¹ you learned it

So take a stand.... in the schools & libraries.... at the ballot box. In your personal interactions w/ people..... **but do it w/ love.**

I’ve been asked before, what if one of your kids told you they were gay?.... I’d love him or her with all of my heart. I’d pray for him or her every day, but I’d never agree to accept that what they were doing was right & pleasing to God. I’d have to call a sin a sin!

And then one more thing – I’d love them believing that God can change their hearts. **Where do we find such hope?**

-In the fact that God saved sinners like us

-In the fact that God can transform & save anyone

The bible tells me so...**1 Cor. 6...[read vv. 9-11]**

Isn’t that remarkable? Another laundry list of sins & sinners, but then that beautiful statement in v. 11... “**And such were some of you....**”

But you were washed – your sin & guilt were cleansed

You were sanctified – your were set apart for godliness

You were justified – you were declared not guilty [righteous] in God’s courtroom because of the righteous work of Christ on the cross and the work of the Holy Spirit.

-That’s how a wretch like me was transformed & saved

-That’s how Paul was converted. As well as these sinful people in Corinth

But we’re talking about homosexuality... that’s on the list [v.9]

Years ago a woman named Rosaria Butterfield wrote a book entitled, **“The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert”**

The subtitle is **“an English professor’s journey into the Christian faith”**

You can also read her story at ChristianityToday.com – she wrote an article called, **“My Train Wreck Conversion”**

Rosaria was a professor at Syracuse University in upstate New York. She was a lesbian, living with another woman, immersed in the liberal atmosphere & activism of Syracuse, socializing with like-minded people. She thought Christians & their God were Stupid, Pointless & Menacing [to use her words].

In the 90’s She wrote a critically charged article about the Christian men’s movement known as Promise Keepers.... In response she got letters of support and lots of hate letters, but one letter was kind & probing. It came from a Presbyterian Pastor in the area. She threw it away, but later fished it out of the trash. **The Hound of Heaven was pursuing her.**

To make a long story short, the pastor & his wife befriended Rosaria. They had her over for dinner. They exchanged books to read. They loved her & her friends. Eventually Rosaria started reading the bible. She then started attending the Presbyterian Church. Then came the day her eyes were finally opened & she surrendered to God’s wooing.

Today Rosaria Butterfield is married to a Presbyterian Pastor and is the mother of 4 children. That’s what God can do thru Jesus Christ! And even if there is not a total re-orientation, a person once trapped in the sin of homosexuality can transformed by the gospel

of Christ and live a life of purity.

Our responsibility is to stand firm, loving our neighbors & friends & family members & co-workers, and believing that God can change any heart w/ the good news of Jesus Christ.