

## **“QUESTION 27: GAY MARRIAGE - WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY? (Mark 10:6-9)**

1.19.20

### **INTRODUCTION**

It's crazy, isn't it? So many sins out there, but one sin gets the designation of “pride” along with it. I mean, we never hear about kidnapper's pride or liar's pride or drunk driver's pride. But the world seems to insist that we hear about “gay pride.” Talk about “reimagining” something.

This is one of those topics in our culture that draws immense scrutiny and some major passions: gay marriage. Those in favor of it are called “affirming” and “welcoming.” Those against it are often called “bigoted” or “narrow-minded.” In that context, the idea of being “fundamentalist” is decidedly negative. So let's take a look at the two sides involved in all this.

On one side, “Homosexuality is considered an acceptable practice by many in our world today — even by some churches. Many homosexuals believe that their desires are normal and that they have a right to express them” — *The Handbook of Biblical Application, Neil S. Wilson, editor, page 303.*

On the other side, one of the other pieces of our world today is us: the church. We adhere to a worldview that states that society does not set the standard for God's law. God does not obligate nor encourage us to fulfill all our desires (even normal ones). Those desires that violate his laws must be controlled.” But, beyond that, we are here, we exist, as Paul said, “ambassadors” of Jesus Christ. As such, we have a duty to speak truth to the culture, but as Paul cautioned the Ephesians, to always be *speaking the truth in love — Paul, Ephesians 4:15a* and, as Peter advised, *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect — I Peter 3:15b.* That is certainly what we are going to be trying to accomplish this morning: to speak with gentleness, respect and love, but to speak the truth.

Approximately 4.5% of Americans self-identify as “gay/lesbian” (June 2019), meaning a little over 11 million Americans. The same study showed that a majority of Americans vastly overestimate the “lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-questioning (“LGBTQ”) population, thinking that just under 1 in 4 people are LGBTQ (23.8% to be precise). And yet, due largely to the efforts of the gay and lesbian community, that small segment of our national population, gay marriage was declared the law of the United States by the US Supreme Court on Friday, June 26, 2015. How could that happen? How could a population that small compared to the overall population of the country push through such a profound change in our culture?

To answer that, we are going to look at not only some theology but also some history. And then we will look at some common arguments that attempts to validate the gay/lesbian lifestyle, and see how they can be addressed. And finally, we will be looking at our place as Christians and as a church in this cultural conversation.

### **HISTORY**

To really understand how we got here, we need to look at three very broad, general timeframes of American history:

**Law in colonial America (the 18<sup>th</sup> century):** was founded in a belief that God existed and, therefore, since man was responsible to his Creator (since there was a Supreme Being over all), there were absolute standards by which moral judgments could be measured. . . . No law should be passed that would be contrary to the law of God. This understood that God is the source of all

laws, and that all men are created equal; nothing says that quite so clear as our own Declaration of Independence: “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*” That meant that there were no social distinctions; nobody was above the law. God was above everybody and, because God is above everybody, everybody is under the law of God.

**Law in transitional America (the 19<sup>th</sup> century):** the law was weakened by two major influences:

- 1) The development of evolution. The idea that man evolved, versus being created, meant that there was no Creator, and therefore no necessary obligation to any higher power. But the true impact of evolution was its influence in other areas of life. Morals, for example, were now seen as constantly evolving. Evolutionary thought impacted the law as well, to the point that Supreme Court justice Oliver Holmes Jr. would say that laws are “beliefs that have triumphed and no more.”
- 2) The development of liberal theology. The Bible became just one book among many, and was by no means to be considered an objective revelation about God. Inerrancy was a myth, as were miracles, heaven, hell and so on. Jesus? A good man, important teacher, but no resurrection; he died just like anybody else.

Put the two together, and theologian John Warwick Montgomery explains the result like this: “[T]he loss of the Bible leads to the loss of God, for in the Bible God is most clearly revealed; the loss of God leaves Man at the naked mercy of his fellows, where might makes right” — quoted by Erwin Lutzer, *When A Nation Forgets God*, page 71.

**Law in modern America.** Francis Schaeffer’s “sociological law” — the belief that there are no absolutes but rather a relative, evolutionary morality. Law is what the majority wants or what the judges say it is. No challenges based on an idea of absolutes derived from a Creator; man and man alone is the source of laws. As such, it is no longer possible for someone to declare that all men are created equal. If there is no Creator, and we are just an evolving species, decisions will be based on the moment, with no regard to any idea of a Supreme Being. So what are the consequences of for that kind of modern American law?

- 1) “Law reflects a nation’s priorities, agenda, and values” — Erwin Lutzer, *When A Nation Forgets God*, pages 62.
- 2) “When you choose your authority, you choose your god, and when you look for your law, there is your god” — R.J. Rushdoony, *Law and Liberty*, page 33. *Ibid.*, page 63.
- 3) The unfortunate thing: “Without a belief in God, nothing is unconditionally wrong” — *Ibid.*, page 65.

So, without any moral compass, the desires of the homosexual agenda began to find their voice in the propaganda they ceaselessly presented.

- 1) “Almost any behavior begins to look normal if you are exposed to enough of it” — Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen, gay activists, *The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage*, Erwin W. Lutzer, page 13.
- 2) “[P]eople will believe a big lie sooner than a little one; and if you repeat it frequently enough people will sooner or later believe it” — from a United States “Office of Strategic Services (OSS)” report of Hitler’s psychological profile, prepared during World War II.

- 3) “[B]y an able and persistent use of propaganda heaven itself can be presented to the people as if it were hell and, vice versa, the most miserable kind of life can be presented as if it were paradise” — Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, chapter 10.

And, without any moral absolutes, as Francis Schaeffer observed: “People drift along from generation to generation, and the morally unthinkable becomes thinkable as the years move on” (TV — Lucy, Dick Van Dyke, *All in the Family*).

**CLASSIC BIBLICAL ARGUMENTS:** Certainly the Scriptures presents very clearly God’s viewpoint on any kind of same-sex behaviors:

- 1) ***“Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable” — God speaking, Leviticus 18:22***
- 2) ***“If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads” — God speaking, Leviticus 20:13.***
- 3) ***God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error — Paul, Romans 1:24-27.***
- 4) ***[D]o you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God — Paul, I Corinthians 6:9-10.***
- 5) ***It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit — Paul, I Thessalonians 4:3-8.***
- 6) ***[T]he law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me — Paul, I Timothy 1:9-11.***

**REASONS GOD CREATED MARRIAGE:**

- 1) “Be fruitful and multiply” — procreation, the joy of being a parent.
- 2) The joy of marital intimacy, very literally the indescribable feeling of “the two becoming one flesh in the consummation or act of marriage.
- 3) A spiritual creation reflecting God’s desire for intimate relationship. God uses marriage repeatedly throughout the Scriptures as a picture of his desired relationship:

- a) In the OT, he is pictured as the husband of an unfaithful wife (Israel). The prophet Hosea was literally a living picture of this as he was commanded to marry a woman named Gomer, who was a prostitute.
- b) In the NT, Jesus is pictured as the bridegroom and his church as the bride. Again, intimacy of relationship is the picture.

## ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF GAY LIFESTYLE

- 1) “I was born that way.” The idea is that, if it can be proven that homosexuality is genetic versus a lifestyle, then gays are off the hook: It is not a sin, it is not an immoral choice. If they are not responsible for their sexual preferences, then they are free, just like heterosexuals to act out their feelings. “Only a sadistic God would create hundreds of thousands of humans to be inherently homosexual and then deny them the right to sexual intimacy” (quoted from Stanton Jones and Mark Yarhouse, *Homosexuality: The Use Of Scientific Research In The Moral Debate*, page 51. In other words, since gayness was created by God, their lifestyle must be affirmed. “Even if we argue that we are born with certain predispositions, we still have human responsibility for our lifestyles and actions. [MY MARRIAGE.]. Ever since the Fall in Eden, we all have a predisposition to sin. These fallen desires (often referred to as *lusts* in Scripture) must be channeled, directed, and often denied the fulfillment they crave. When we hear someone say that he or she has a ‘right’ to homosexual behavior, we have to point out that sexual intimacy is not a right. Rather than the language of rights, we have to return to the language of obligations. And in the Bible, it is clear that we have an obligation to be sexually chaste if we are not married and sexually faithful if we are. We cannot argue that our desires are ‘from God’ and therefore worthy of fulfillment. . . . Regardless of our sexual desires, whether genetic or acquired, we are creatures created with the ability to choose, and we are held accountable to God for those choices” — Erwin Lutzer, *The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage*, pages 74, 75.
- 2) “Homosexuality cannot be changed.” This question must be asked: Even if someone finds that he or she cannot change to heterosexual desires, does this justify living the homosexual lifestyle? Look at what I Corinthians 6 tells us: ***[D]o you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God — Paul, I Corinthians 6:9-10.*** The fact is that the sexual sins we see in our culture today are nothing new. First-century Corinth saw as much immorality as we do. But look at what’s next, what Paul points out in the following verse: ***not the strength of sin, but the life-changing strength of the gospel: And that is what some of you were. 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 — Paul, I Corinthians 6:11.*** Paul underscores exactly what we need to understand: The gospel CHANGES people. The Corinthians are proof of that — what they were they no longer are. They are new — in Christ! Now let’s be honest: A gospel that does not change the heart is no gospel, no “good news,” at all. But that is what the gospel of Jesus Christ can do — and this is the gospel we have been given to proclaim! Now, does that mean that people with same-sex inclinations were healed of that perspective? Not necessarily. But what it does mean is that, in coming to Christ, they come to understand that the life God calls everybody to is one of holiness — a holiness that reflects him. And that call is to everybody — heterosexual and homosexual

alike. “How do I show Jesus, how do I reflect God, in this situation?” For homosexuals, that may mean a life of singleness. There is nothing in Scripture about marriage being a “right.” A possible joy, a privilege for sure, but never is it declared a right.

- 3) “Gay marriage is a matter of civil rights.” A block of homosexual activists have equated the fight for gay marriage with the fight African-Americans undertook against discrimination. There is a huge difference: Being black-skinned IS a matter of genetics. But many gays argue that being gay is who they are; it is their identity. However, that is saying that my desires are my identity — giving our desires a huge priority in our lives. As Jones and Yarhouse point out: “[M]uch that is fundamental to our identities is bad — we are, after all, sinful and fallen to the core and while that is a part of our identities, it is not something around which to cultivate an identity” — *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church’s Moral Debate*, fn, page 167. And the fact is, many people who have left the gay lifestyle say the first step in that journey was to disengage from the idea that gayness was the essence of their personhood. After all, personhood is who I am created in the image of God.
- 4) “Jesus didn’t mention homosexuality.” The argument made here is that Jesus clearly preached love to others and, in fact, directly associated himself with anybody and everybody who came his way. Therefore, his lifestyle proclaims acceptance of all people as they are. But that ignores our section of Scripture today —

## TEXT

***“[A]t the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” — Jesus Christ, Mark 10:6-9 (quoting Genesis 1:27, 2:24).***

Christ is designating marriage as between a “male and female.” He is not referring simply to a “couple” of human beings, nor is he making any mention of a “committed” relationship. He is specifically calling attention to “male and female.” And bear this in mind from Paul’s letter to the Colossian church: ***The Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together — Paul, Colossians 1:15-17.*** The unique design of marriage as being between “male and female” was authored by Jesus Christ himself; he is here referring to something of his divine creation, design and intention. And he should know: he was there when it happened. And beyond that, we have this verse from Malachi: ***[T]he Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant — Malachi 2:14.*** As Erwin Lutzer points out, “[S]exual intercourse in and of itself does not constitute marriage. A man and a woman are made husband and wife by a covenant taken in the presence of God and witnesses. . . . The covenant justifies the sexual relationship; the sexual relationship does not justify the covenant” — Erwin Lutzer, *The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage*, page 51.. And, beyond that, Jesus did not simply come alongside people and then leave them to live as they wanted. A great example? The woman caught in adultery [TELL STORY from John 8.]

- 5) “How can you discriminate against me?” One of the aspects of this issue that Christians have to deal with is the use of very powerful words, words that elicit strong emotions. In particular, the words that seem most often thrown out are “intolerant” and

“discrimination.” Conservative radio talk show host Dennis Prager said this about society’s responses to any accusation of being “intolerant”: “When the average American hears the word ‘intolerance,’ he jumps through hoops to avoid being associated with such an awful thing.” The truth is, the Bible is a very intolerant book; for example:

- a) It is intolerant of sexual sins, regardless of heterosexual or homosexual.
- b) It is intolerant of those who believe false doctrines and teach others to follow.
- c) It is intolerant of any other belief other than: “Jesus Christ is Lord.”
- d) It discriminates against believers and nonbelievers regarding heaven and hell.
- e) It proclaims a series of unbending, unyielding “ones.” So what are the “ones?” That’s my way of referring to what the Bible says both about God, his ways, and his word:
  - i) ***“God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind” — Balaam, Numbers 23:19a.***
  - ii) ***“[Y]ou remain the same, and your years will never end” — Anonymous, Psalms 102:27.***
  - iii) ***“[T]here is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me” — God speaking, Isaiah 45:21b.***
  - iv) ***“I the Lord do not change” — God speaking, Malachi 3:6a.***
  - v) ***“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” — Jesus Christ, John 14:6.***
  - vi) ***“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” — Peter, Acts 4:12.***
  - vii) ***[T]here is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus — Paul, I Timothy 2:5.***
  - viii) ***There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy — James 4:12a.***

The Bible is one arc of story, with God being the subject of that story. One of the arguments from the gay community is that the “holiness code” of the OT (think all the prohibitions found in Leviticus) are no longer relevant because, when Jesus died, all those rules and regulations went away. In terms of the OT sacrificial system, rules about clothing and mold in your home and all that kind of stuff, yes. But holiness as a lifestyle to reflect the image of God? No! Think of the OT and NT like a rose: [EXPAND]. In other words, the holiness called for in the OT, the idea, as God said, to ***“Come out from their midst and be separate (holy)” — II Corinthians 6:17 (quoting Isaiah 52:11 [NASB])***, is just as relevant for us today as it was for Israel. Holiness by its very design is intolerant; it is discriminatory. And, very often, it is gay activists who are intolerant of anybody who doesn’t believe and pursue the same exercises of lifestyle as they do.

- 6) “I’m a Christian and God accepts my homosexuality.” Other words bandied about in our culture are “inclusivity” and “affirming.” The idea is that, as God is a God of love, everyone is welcome — and so is every behavior. Yes, God loves everybody and everybody is welcome — but his love is not unconditional, irregardless of our behaviors. The truth is, God loves us despite ourselves. And Christ’s sacrificial death for our sins on the cross, the ultimate picture of God’s love, comes with a full expectation of response. If no response was necessary, why does the cross even happen? God’s love for us calls for us to surrender ourselves — surrender, give up, everything about ourselves, to completely become his. There is no such thing as doing Christianity “my way.” It’s God’s way or no way! It’s living to please him — only him. Christianity can be realized no other way.

“[T]hose who say that they are Christians but persist in these practices with no sign of remorse or change of life will not inherit the kingdom of God. Such people need to reevaluate their lives to see if they truly believe in Christ.” *Ibid.*, page 304.

- 7) “Look at the divorce rate.” This argument says that heterosexual marriage is no guarantee of a lifelong unity or successful relationship. And that, unfortunately, is true. In the United States, nearly 50% of all marriages end in divorce. Statistically, a divorce occurs every 13 seconds — meaning that there are nine (9) divorces in the average amount of time it takes a couple to recite their marriage vows (two minutes). The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy reports (in January 2018) that approximately 15% of married women and 25% of married men have had extramarital affairs. Those figures jump about 20% for each when emotional and sexual relationships without intercourse are included. But the figures for the gay community, particularly among gay men, are far above those figures. A study of 156 male couples (the study’s authors were also gay) found that, for those together for at least five (5) years (100 couples), none had been sexually monogamous. The authors of the study suggested that, for gay couples, monogamy was a passing stage of “internalized homophobia,” and that many homosexual males distinguish between sexual and emotional faithfulness. Emotional, versus physical, faithfulness is what matters. In other words, they can have as many partners as they want as long as they do not become emotionally attached.

### THE GREATEST DANGER

“When the first sexual experience (or subsequent ones) occurs outside the marriage covenant, the [alien] sexual bond (a sexual bond that violates biblical boundaries) can be so powerful that it can even determine the direction of a person’s sexual orientation” — *Ibid.*, page 54. It is no wonder that victims of child abuse, particularly same-sex abuse, fall into that lifestyle — or that women who have been abused by a spouse or lover seem to keep returning, despite the abuse.

***Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh” — Paul, I Corinthians 6:15-16 (quoting Genesis 2:24). Commentary: “Paul says that, when a man has sex with a prostitute . . . even then “the two will become one flesh.” Sex binds two people together not just physically, but also in the soul and spirit even apart from marriage; there is an imprint made by two such partners with each other. Sex with a prostitute forms an alien bond [a bond that violates the biblical boundaries], a bond outside the boundaries and nurture of a marriage covenant. This bond is an intruder, a violation of what God intended” — Erwin Lutzer, *The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage*, page 53.***

### APPLICATION

“We must never speak of homosexuality as if it is the one sin worthy of the eternal flames. Yes, the Bible does condemn homosexuality, but it also condemns a host of other sins that are rampant in the best of our churches. If all we do is shout at homosexuals across a chasm, be assured we will hear only the echo of our own voice ringing in the air. . . . It is not enough to condemn the darkness, if we fail to shine a light of hope on our disintegrating culture” — Erwin Lutzer, *The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage*, pages 16, 17.

“Those who commit homosexual acts are not to be feared, ridiculed, or hatred. They can be forgiven, and their lives can be transformed. The church should be as haven of forgiveness and

healing for repentant homosexuals without compromising its stance against homosexual behavior.” *Ibid.*, page 303.

“In a permissive society it is easy for Christians to overlook or tolerate some immoral behaviors (greed, drunkenness, etc.) while remaining outraged at others (homosexuality, thievery). We must not participate in sin or condone it in any way, nor may we be selective about what we condemn or excuse. . . . God expects his followers in any age to have high standards.” *Ibid.*, page 304.

## CONCLUSION

So, as we close, what is one other takeaway from gay marriage becoming the law of the land when less than 5% of the population identifies as gay? At some level, they wanted it more. History tells us that the Nazi party started with less than a dozen men meeting in the back room of a bar. But one of those guys was Adolf Hitler. The Nazis never received a majority vote in any election in which they were involved. They were never the party of the majority of Germans. But nobody wanted power more than Hitler. He wanted it more, and therefore he worked harder and was more focused on the goal, the outcome, than anybody else in Germany. And of course we all know the result of that.

What about us? How bad do we want the salvation of others? That’s what we’re here to do — and that applies to everybody we need.

We can NEVER forget: ***For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God — Paul, Romans 3:23 (plus James 2:10, Isaiah 64:6).*** We live in and are participants in a broken, shattered world. Sin did that — all sin, including ours. We were broken until Jesus Christ began his gracious ministry of putting us back together again — in his image.

And it is that image that we are to project to the world — in our words, in our actions, in our affirming, in our welcoming, all in the name of Jesus. And despite all the antagonism and resentments that may be directed our way, we persevere in Paul’s direction: speaking truth in love.

Largely because of the efforts of those like the LGBTQ community who promote a lifestyle directly opposed to the kingdom of God, many of our freedoms may seem at risk of being curtailed — or even eliminated. But that doesn’t change our call. Remember: “[Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego — Daniel 3] proved that it is not necessary to have freedom to be faithful. We are not required to win our political battles; we are expected to show our commitment even in the face of threats and sanctions” — Erwin Lutzer, *When A Nation Forgets God*, page 78. And the fact is, this is NOT about winning or losing. Too much energy often gets used up in “winning the debate,” forgetting that this is a spiritual battle, with eternal destinies very much at stake. When we take on the image of God through Jesus Christ, not only do we take on his holiness, but also his passion for sinners. Jesus died for sinners. Can we really choose another route when our Master chose the route he did?

This is the world, this is the culture, we were placed in and called to. And what are we to do? To be a reflection of God and his Son Jesus Christ to the world. Which means we love them, and come alongside them, and minister to them, that they may see God in us. That’s the deal. Let’s pray!