



MAY I ASK A QUESTION

PASTOR'S NOTES - PART 16

HOMOSEXUALITY

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May I Ask A Question?
 Part 16: Homosexuality
 Pastor Jeffrey Dean Smith

I want to be extremely clear before we begin our time of teaching today. Today's questions are questions we should be answering as the Church of Jesus Christ. However, my answers are not going to gain us popularity among the mainstream world and, potentially, even among many professing Christians.

The answers to these are often ignored or skewed to fit the narrative of pop culture and the mainstream religions of today. And anyone who dares speak of or preach the truth regarding these topics is often labeled a homophobe, hater, and religious fanatic out-of-touch and of no-grace and love towards an ever-evolving world and Church.

However you feel about the answers to the questions I present today, my encouragement for you is to pray, even now, that God will reveal to you His loving grace and compassion, and too, His righteous will and plan as it relates to these topics.

I too want to make 5 foundational statements as to guide today's time of teaching:

1. Within the world are a cesspool of entrapments that, if not carefully acknowledged, can lead me astray.

My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam on the mountains. They wandered over mountain and hill and forgot their own resting place.

Jeremiah 50:6

2. As a sinful human being, I am drawn to a lifestyle contrary to holiness.

All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Romans 3:12

3. All sin is offensive to God.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

Colossians 3:5-6

4. No sin is lesser or greater than another.

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

James 2:10

5. Without Jesus, it is impossible for me to consistently choose what is right.

And without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

The first time we read of such a lifestyle is a mere 19 chapters into the biblical story of humanity. Let's first look at:

Genesis 19:1-25

I have two questions after reading this passage:

1. What action by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah was so offensive to God?

To answer this question, I have to remind you why we as the Church are to examine the fullness of Scripture when arriving at the proper answer to such critical questions. Before these 2 angels arrive at Sodom in Genesis 19, there is already a great ordained story that has unfolded that serves as the foundational orthodoxy as to why the sins of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are so very egregious against the Holy God.

Journey with me...

Prior to the arrival of these two angels at Sodom, we know that three men visited Abraham at Mamre where Abraham lived.

Genesis 18:1-10

Abraham had already been told by the Lord that He would be promised a Son upon whose name would God bless His people:

Genesis 15:1-6

Mamre was approximately 20 miles Northwest from the Dead Sea. Directly across the Sea would have been the region of Moab. And both Sodom and Gomorrah sat southeast of Mamre on the west side of Moab near the banks of the Dead Sea. So when the men looked down, or southeast from Mamre, they looked directly toward Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 18:16-19

Do you see what just happened? The Lord, and His angels, look down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and make the statement that, in verse 18:

“Abraham will become a great and powerful nation, and all nations will be blessed by him.”

The Lord goes on to say in verse 19:

Genesis 18:19

The Lord is stating that it is imperative that His people and their children are to follow His ways and to "... keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just!"

He then speaks to the atrocity of the acts of Sodom and Gomorrah and the reality that their ways are an abomination against His Holy plans because they are not right and just!

Genesis 18:20-21

When I fully examine God's Holy plan for His people, I too understand that the choice for one to partake in a homosexual lifestyle isn't merely a sexual orientation decision.

It instead is a prostitution against God's anointed disposition and character for His people, and specifically, His fundamental blueprint for marriage and the family.

The action by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah was so offensive to God because it was an action in complete contempt to God's holy design.

Thus, the second question I have in reading this passage in Genesis 19:

2. Why did this action warrant God's decision to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah?

Notice again:

Genesis 18:1-2

How many men appeared to Abraham?

Three.

But we do not read of "three" men arriving at Sodom:

Genesis 19:1

What happened to the third man? The third man was the Lord. But the Lord did not go with His angels into Sodom and Gomorrah. Why? I presume this is because of the great sin of these cities. The Lord would not step foot into these cities in which every single man had defiled His plan of holiness.

Genesis 19:4-5

I often hear from those who disagree with the biblical structure of marriage that the Lord has ordained.

I too hear from those, even among the Church, who believe Christians dwell on this ad nauseum.

I shared with a Pastor friend of mine this week where we were headed with the May I Ask A Question? Series and even he said:

Why do Christians seem to get on this *one* issue when there are so very many other issues and sins and abominations against God's Holy Word? I agree.

Guys, we have to get this right... the balance of no compromise with love.

There are many, many lifestyle choices the world coddles and celebrates that can be defined as an abomination against the Holy God. As the Church, we should be leading rather than ignoring the discussion, on a plethora of issues crippling families and imprisoning lives. And we should avoid at all costs any attempt to act in a way that ostracizes or condemns another and instead speak truth with grace and mercy and love.

The problem for much of Christianity is that we condemn without compassion, and we label without love.

Rather than opening the door to conversations that lead to life-change, we instead draw hard lines mostly void of kindness often to be viewed by the world as obsolete, judgmental, and homophobic.

Instead, we should be the loudest voice of love that does not merely highlight the sins of humanity. Rather, the voice above all others that points to the beauty and richness and grace to be discovered in a life of freedom that begins with Jesus.

I was asked by a friend recently: Do you think you can change the opinion of someone who is gay?

I thought about that question for a very long time...

My response: First, I know God can do anything. But as it relates to me and my words and my actions... I am not sure. And I too am not sure that this should even be my responsibility. I've thought often of this question this week and I am confident:

My pursuit as a follower of Christ is to love as Christ regardless of the actions or lifestyle choice of another.

Whether I am to change one's opinion or not... I do know this...

Heart change is more likely when I lead with love.

Now, I too will say...

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AT THE SMITHS

Any act that is at odds with God's holy and ordained design for marriage is not merely a relationship or lifestyle choice.

It is an egregious act that defiles the fundamental consecration of God's blueprint for our lives.

I officiated a wedding yesterday in beautiful Lebanon. It was a gorgeous evening to get married. I shared last night with Lauren and Cody that the union of marriage is the most sacred of all unions that the Lord has ordained.

And we need to look no further than the second chapter of Genesis to witness the origin of God's very first act of ordination over the uniting of two people:

Genesis 2:18-25

The very first introduction we have of man and woman is one ordained by God to be a sacred union.

United /Hebrew/ dabaq

= to be fastened together as one; to overtake as two parts are joined into one.

So, when man awakens, everything has changed!

Think about this – Adam went to sleep, he awoke, and no longer was he alone.

But too, he is now united, “fastened together as one” with woman, two parts “overtaken and joined into one” to never again be separated.

And here is what is really important:

1. Man nor woman did not have a voice in this decision.

2. Neither can un-unite what God unites.

This is exactly what Jesus, God's Son, had to say about this very design from His Father:

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.

Matthew 19:5-6

So, when the people of Sodom and Gomorrah exclaim to Lot:

Genesis 19:5

... they are not merely desiring to make a choice for a man to be with a man.

No! These people are desecrating God's plan for Abraham and his descendants to follow, and ultimately, they too are actually fighting to un-unite what God has united!

Genesis 19:9

Therefore, God destroyed them.

Genesis 19:27-29

From this time forward in Scripture, we never again read of the homosexual lifestyle in a positive note. Instead, we clearly see that it is an abomination against the very plan of unity that God has designed for humanity between a man and a woman:

Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.

Leviticus 18:22

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.

Romans 1:26-27

Or do 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.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

We also know that the 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.

1 Timothy 1:9-11

What would Jesus say about the current LGBTQ lifestyle?

First, I wonder how many here today fully understand this acronym. I don't want the focus of this acronym to monopolize our time today. We truly could spend hours on this one acronym. But here's a quick reference point for us. And I encourage you to spend more time educating yourself and your family on all of this. I'll offer a brief overview here. The full acronym, as it is today, detailing the spectrum of each lifestyle is:

LGBTQIA2S

L: Lesbian female + female

G: Gay male + male

B: Bi-sexual – attraction to both sexes

T: A gender identity that does not correspond with the gender assigned at birth

Q: One questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender orientation

I: Intersex – One born with biological traits that are outside the strict male/female gender anatomy

A: Asexual – One who does not experience sexual attraction toward individuals of any gender

2S: Two-spirit or two genders

What would Jesus say about all of this?

I am always careful to never put words in the mouth of Jesus. I don't know word for word what Jesus would say. I do know that Jesus always coupled compassion with conviction:

John 8:1-11

I don't know her background story. I don't know what led her to do what she did. I presume she had history and challenges and things that happened in her past and potentially people who had mistreated her and misunderstood her. She possibly felt alone. She may have been abused. It is possible she was confused, broken, abandoned and more.

I don't know all there is to know about her.

What I do know, Her action was:

An action in contempt to God's design for the marriage bed.

This is exactly what we saw in Genesis 19 with Sodom and Gomorrah. And we have to remember:

No matter the back story.

No matter the previous hurt.

No matter the confusion.

No matter the heartache.

Any action in contempt of God's design for holiness is sin.

Period.

And we see Jesus respond offering compassion coupled with conviction:

John 8:11

Previously this morning we read what Matthew recorded Jesus stated about His Father's work in uniting two to become one. Mark records a similar statement in Mark 10:

But at 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.

Mark 10:6-9

My child recently told me she is struggling with an attraction to a female. I love her and want her to be happy. I don't want her to feel unloved and unaccepted. How am I to respond?

These words of Solomon are quite popular. Read them with me:

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

Many times these words have been quoted. But let me show you another statement of Solomon's that is less popular; I presume less read but equally powerful and wise:

Ecclesiastes 3:14b

Nothing can be added to it.
Nothing can be taken from it.

To what is he referring?

Solomon is simply stating that, "What God has orchestrated... is!"

And to all that Solomon has humored - - all of the chasing; all of the experimenting; all of the indulging; all of the ecstasy; all of the "feel good;" all of the searching for fulfillment...

It is all meaningless because nothing is to be added to and nothing can be taken away from what God has already done for you and for me.

To the one who asked this question about your daughter, and to anyone else among us who finds yourself in a similar situation with one whom you love, I do hope that you have been listening today. Everything we have discussed must be coupled with the following two statements:

I cannot always control how I feel.

I can always control how I respond to how I feel.

This is super hard when a loved one, such as a child or grandchild or friend or co-worker is struggling. I get it. We want those whom we love to find their place, feel at peace, and experience joy and happiness and be content.

However, when a loved one shares with me a lifestyle that is dishonoring to God's Holy Word, what I do next is so very important. And what I do next cannot be swayed by emotion.

Love is not love if it encourages another to any act contrary to the ways of Scripture. I love others best when I love enough to place God's holiness before their happiness.

The Psalmist wrote:

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.
Psalm 37:5-6

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.
1 Peter 2:21

And Paul, to the Church of Corinth, said this:

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.
1 Corinthians 11:1

You see Church...

If I am to love, to truly love others, I am to do so fully aware that such love requires of me no compromise to the ways of Scripture.

And in doing so, I must too know that my love may be received as hate to the world.

So this leads us to this very important final question of the morning:

Can someone be gay and be a Christian?

Boy... you guys aren't pulling any punches with these questions, are you?

I remind you of one of the foundational statements with which I began this morning:

As a sinful human being, I am drawn to a lifestyle contrary to holiness.

This is true for us each. We are each drawn towards certain tendencies with which we are prone to struggle.

For some, there is the tendency of struggle with lust. For others, it is for control. Yet others, the tendency is very real for worldly possessions. And yes, for some, the struggle is with same-sex attraction.

There is the tendency among the Church to declare homosexuality as the sin above all other sins of which to be drawn. This would be incorrect.

No one is sinless and no sin is greater than another.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:8

And no sin, absolutely no sin, is so powerful, that it cannot be overcome:

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

What distinguishes a Christian from that of a non-Christian's life is the exact word: "struggle."

The life of a Christ-follower is exactly this:

A life of one struggling and wrestling to daily die to self and to become as Christ.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.

Philippians 3:8

Jesus said:

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

Luke 9:23

As a Christian, I will struggle. However:

Change occurs when life-change occurs.

Paul spoke to this very idea that once we become saved, we change:

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.

1 Corinthians 6:11

I do not see in Scripture any support to the idea that one perpetually and unrepentantly engages in continual sin as a Christian.

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
Galatians 5:22-23**

The struggle can end where I allow God's grace to begin.