

Human Sexuality and the Sovereignty of God

What the Bible Actually Teaches About Homosexuality- Part 1

August 2, 2015

Hebrews 13:1-6

1 Let love of the brethren continue.

2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

3 Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, *and* those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

4 Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage* bed *is to be* undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

5 *Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "**I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,**"

6 so that we confidently say, "**THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?**"

To the Glory of God

Now as I told you last week- every so often there arises an issue that is so important and so serious, and one that has such far reaching ramifications- that it warrants an examination by the Church. I stand before you this morning to say that we are faced with just such an issue in our day. The recent ruling by the Supreme Court of the United States institutes a radical departure from almost 240 years of history and jurisprudence, and it *imposes* upon this nation a "standard" for Marriage that is based upon a logic that is patently *unbiblical* and *ungodly*.

And as we have already learned- God did not sovereignly and actively *cause* evil men to align themselves with demons to concoct false teaching to seek to overthrow the Truth of God about Human Sexuality-

but He has sovereignly and passively *allowed* this radical departure from Biblical morality to come to the door of the Church. And by doing that- in His Divine Wisdom- God is *forcing* the Christian Church to stand up and speak out and to go back to the Source and to find out what God said about that issue in infallible Scripture. And then God the Spirit moves upon certain men to rise up and engage the enemy head on and fight to preserve the integrity and glory and beauty and clarity of Biblical Christianity and to do what the half- brother of Jesus said in **Jude 3**:

... contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

And so it is *our* time now. God has moved *providentially* to bring the fight to us at this time. We did not seek this fight and did not want it- but it is here. And so now the world turns to us for a response that is both Biblical, and, therefore, eternal about the evil that God has allowed wicked men to bring to the door of the Church here in the first few years of the 21st Century.

The issue that we face today is *not* the Nature of God the Father or God the Son; it isn't the Essence of Grace- but it is no less serious. We are faced with the issue of Human Sexuality, and whether sexual deviance and perversion- in *any* of its manifestations- can become *less* sinful and *less* egregious, and, therefore, more acceptable to God and His Church than Scripture declares.

But there are several *secondary* issues that are also affected by the issue of Human Sexuality such as: "The Institution of Marriage", "Qualifications for Church Membership and Leadership", and "The Relationship between Church and State". And so this warrants me to take a "vacation" from our verse by verse "journey" through the Gospel of Luke and to examine just what God has revealed in sacred Scripture about "Human Sexuality and the Sovereignty of God".

This series will result in us adopting the findings into our Doctrinal Statement and By-Laws- which will necessitate every single member to sign a *new* Membership Covenant that reflects this addition. I am also mindful that for the first time in my life- I, personally, and this Church will *officially* be at odds with the Government of the United States. And we will also be at odds with the general direction that

American society is heading- even though *that* has been true for quite some time.

And that also means that the Christian Church and the people of the Church are on a collision course with the Government of this country and the Culture around us that will manifest itself in *some* way the future. And how much or how big or how small that collision will be- is up to God- Who alone is Sovereign over all things- including the decisions of evil men. So this is a real big deal. And, therefore, I approach this series with great seriousness and great trembling because I realize what all is at stake.

But one thing I will *not* do- and that is I will *not* be silent about this subject. I will *not* hesitate to publicly and openly and formally and officially state with absolutely no equivocation what God has said in Scripture about this subject. Because I am not ashamed of the Gospel. And so I will stand on that with full assurance that God is able to protect and deliver us out of the hand of anyone who would seek to undermine Biblical Truth. But if God chooses *not* to rescue us- and He *allows* the actions of evil men to negatively affect us- then know this- I will *not* bow my knees and I will *not* submit to any law or any ruling or any order by any man or any Government that seeks to discount or change or distort what God has already said about Human Sexuality. These messages will be recorded and will put on our Church's Website, and they will be transcribed and recorded into both 15 and 30 minute radio broadcasts. The 30 minute broadcasts began last week and the 15 minutes broadcasts will air beginning tomorrow.

Now the goal of this series will *not* be in analyzing the Supreme Court's decision, per se, or in discussing the encroachment by the Federal Government onto individual rights. I will leave that for others to do. My focus on this subject is on the grammatical, linguistic, contextual, and theological Truth recorded in sacred Scripture concerning Human Sexuality that will form the foundation of what we believe and teach at the Covenant of Peace Church.

For example- The United Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church USA, the Presbyterian Church USA, and other religious groups have made a *theological* argument as to *why* they have acquiesced about this issue and have officially, formally, and publicly changed their position on the issue of Human Sexuality and Marriage- disregarding 500 years of their own history. And that theological argument is based

on a particular logic that they have used that is either correct and is in alignment with Scripture, or it is not. And beginning today and concluding next week- we will go into those theological arguments to see for ourselves whether what these organizations are saying is true.

Now today's message is built around several points designed to give a Biblical vision of Marriage and Human Sexuality in relation to all sexual sins that bring *dishonor* to Marriage. And we begin with the Passage in **Hebrews 13**- *not* because I will give a complete exposition of the entire Passage- but to highlight what the writer of **Hebrews** was moved upon by God the Holy Spirit to pen down in verse 4 that says:

Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

And the complete understanding of this one verse is what I hope to advance- for the Glory God and for our good.

Now in God's Eyes- Marriage is honorable. He established it at Creation and He has *always* honored it ever since. However throughout most of the fallen world today- Marriage is anything but honored.

The phrase here in verse 4, "**Let marriage be held in honor among all**" may very have originally been a Divine Response to certain *ascetic* influences in the early Church that held celibacy to be a holier state than Marriage- especially with men in Ministry. Some of the early Church Fathers, like Origen- had themselves castrated- under the mistaken notion that they could thereby serve God more devotedly.

The Apostle Paul warns that in the "last days" or during the Church Age- apostate teachers will go so far as to actually "**forbid marriage**" (**1 Timothy 4:3**). Yet we see here in **Hebrews 13** that God holds Marriage not only to be *permissible*- but *honorable* and *productive*- even in the Ministry. And so, therefore- as believers- we are to have the same high regard for Marriage as God does. Therefore, *any* activity, *any* teaching, or *any* philosophy that would undermine, demean, or dishonor Marriage is to be utterly rejected by the redeemed soul as being patently against the Will of God.

We have to understand that the Owner and Creator of the Universe honored Marriage by the very Act of *establishing* it. Jesus honored Marriage by performing His first miracle at a wedding. And the Holy Spirit honored Marriage by inspiring the Biblical writers to use it

as a natural, tangible, visible and temporary portrait of the great Mystery of the relationship between Christ and His Church. So, all three Persons of the Trinity testify that Marriage is honorable.

Therefore- all attacks against Marriage- whether that be adultery or mistreatment by one spouse of another or abandonment or lovelessness or divorce or the normalization and acceptance and celebration of sexual perversion and deviation- is sin.

Now the totality of Scripture gives at least three reasons for Marriage:

1. For the propagation of children (**Genesis 1:28**)
2. As a "Means of Grace" to prevent sexual sins (**1Corinthians 7:2**)
3. For Companionship (**Genesis 2:8**)

... and so because the Bible teaches that Marriage can be **"held in honor"** in many ways- Marriage can also be *dishonored* in many ways as well.

Now one of the main ways that Marriage is **"held in honor"** is in the way it is carried out. Marriage should be carried out for one overarching reason- the Glory of God. And to do that- for any Marriage to be to God's Glory- it must be conducted in humble and joyful submission to the Authority of Scripture. And that involves several aspects:

- ✓ Believers should marry believers.
- ✓ Husbands should submit to a broken and trembling "leadership" role in the home where they faithfully love, guide, teach, provide, cherish, and protect the wife and children.
- ✓ Wives should submit to a broken and trembling "support" role in the home where they faithfully love, honor, obey, support, and complement the husband and where they bear, nurture, teach, and help lead the children.

So the concern of both husband and wife should center on the welfare and happiness of the other- on what can be *given* to the other spouse- rather than on what can be *obtained*.

But the overriding element that has been so *devalued* in our day is just how serious God is about sexual purity. So even though men and women may play around with illicit sex and be perfectly within their

"rights" in the eyes of most people in this country- in the Eyes of God however- sexual impurity- in all of its forms- is *always* sin and will *always* be eternally damned by God. Which is why the Apostle Paul gave this warning in **1Corinthians 6:18**:

Flee [sexual] immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the [sexually] immoral man sins against his own body.
[clarification added]

... where the original Greek word used here that was translated into English as "**immorality**" is *porneia*, which is the same basic Greek word used to describe "fornicators" (*pornos*) which are those who engage in sexual intimacy outside of marriage. So fornication involves *all* sinful sexual activity- including adultery, homosexuality, and every other transgression against God's Will for sexual purity.

In other words, sexual sins are not only sins against God that bring pain to *other* people- they are also a powerful destructive force that works against *ourselves*. So part of our moral responsibility as believers is to be sexually pure.

Now the pagan world is obsessed with sex as never before. Sexual activity apart from Marriage is considered not only *acceptable* and *tolerable*- but ongoing, unrepentant sexual sins are considered as being *normal* by more and more people- even within the modern Church. One of the pioneers of the sexual revolution of the last half of the 20th Century said,

"Sex is a function of the body, a drive which man shares with animals, like eating, drinking and sleeping. It's a physical demand that must be satisfied. If you don't satisfy it, you will have all sorts of neuroses and repressive psychoses. Sex is here to stay; let's forget the prudery that makes us hide from it. Throw away those inhibitions, find a girl who's like-minded and let yourself go."¹

Some of the more obvious results of such views are the heartbreaking increases in extramarital pregnancies, forcible rapes, illegitimate births (despite cheap birth control measures and widespread abortions), and venereal diseases of all sorts. And all of this in

¹ Hugh Hefner

spite of the so-called "advancement of women"- which feminism supposedly champions.

The Judgment of God against these sinful behaviors can be seen in the exponential growth of unloved and abused children, broken homes, along with the psychological and physical breakdowns- accompanied by the murders and other violence that is generated when passions are left to dominate people without restraint. It is simply not possible for human beings to live and act against the Moral Absolutes established by God Almighty and not suffer terrible consequences that lead to eventual destruction.

But when professing Christians are sexually impure- the immediate consequences may even be worse- because the testimony of the Gospel itself- which is the only Cure for all these problems- is polluted.

Now within the very *narrow* and *restricted* Covenant of Marriage- sex is beautiful, fulfilling, creative and glorifying to God. But as you *expand* the manifestation of sex to include any unrestrained fleshly lust- the very same act of sexual intimacy becomes ugly, destructive, and damning. Which is why Paul said this in **Ephesians 5:3**:

But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints

So I pray that you can see that the stakes could not be higher in the homosexuality debate, because homosexuality is *not* like other sins. It is *unique* in that homosexuality parallels idolatry. The Apostle Paul was moved along by God the Holy Spirit to make this connection in **Ephesians 5:5** that says:

For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

And he connected the dots again in **Colossians 3:5**

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

Even in the Old Testament the link between sexual immorality and idolatry was made when we see that the Hebrew word translated “fornication” in the Old Testament was also in the context of idolatry, also called “spiritual whoredom.” For example- in **2 Chronicles 21:10-14**, God struck Jehoram with plagues and diseases because he led the people into idolatry. And the writer used sexual imagery to describe it as “they played the harlot”.

Now probably the leading scholar of human sexuality in Scripture in American today is the reformed theologian, Robert Gagnon- the associate professor of the New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. And Gagnon says that the two themes of homosexuality and idolatry are closely related because both idolatry and same-sex intercourse equally oppose the Designs of the Creator. He sees several strong connections that link **Romans 1** to the Creation Account in **Genesis 1&2**. And I want to commend a book that he wrote entitled, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*. In that book, Gagnon writes,

“Idolatry and homosexual behavior are in some measure parallel (not just successive) phenomena since both are presented as willful suppression of the obvious Truth about God and God's Design in the natural world.”²

Gagnon goes on to say,

“Pagan idolatry is twisted because it is the act of *rejecting* the Creator and *replacing* or *exchanging* the worship of Him- with the worship of what He has made. Similarly, homosexual acts are twisted because they reject God's natural Design for human sexuality.”³

And that is why I say that homosexuality and idolatry are related. *Both* are evidence of a twisted distortion of God's Design for men and women, *both* dehumanize men and women, and *both* are rooted in a categorical rejection of the Creator. That is to say, the distortions of idolatry and same-sex intercourse are foremost rooted in a completely

² Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Abingdon Press, 2001), p. 286.

³ “In effect, Paul is saying: Start with the obvious fittedness of human anatomy; when done with that, consider procreative design as a clue; then move to a broad range of interpersonal differences that define maleness and femaleness. These are much better clues to God's will for human sexuality than preexisting, controlling passions — which can be warped by the fall and shaped by socialization factors.” [Robert A. J. Gagnon, “Sexuality,” in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (Baker Academic, 2005), 745–746.]

dysfunctional concept of worship as illustrated by what Paul said in **Romans 1** when he said:

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Now I will tell you straight up that you cannot get more wrong than when your concept of worshipping God is dysfunctional. So the stakes simply could not be higher for sinners who refuse to honor and thank God for His created Design. And when worship dysfunction spreads, and souls hang in the balance- loving Christians speak up- not with voices of spite or hatred to incite violence- but with voices of genuine love and compassion because somebody's eternal soul is at stake.

And this is precisely the point that Gagnon makes when he says:

“Without taking into account God's will for holy living, love turns into affirmation of self-degrading and other-degrading conduct. This means that true love of one's neighbor does not embrace every form of consensual behavior. What constitutes an expression of love to one's neighbor depends significantly on how one assesses the benefit or harm of the neighbor's behavior. If indeed homosexual behavior is sin and an obstacle to the fullness of life available in Christ, then the Church has an obligation both to protect the Church from the debilitating effect of sanctioned immorality and to protect the homosexual for whom more is at stake than the satisfaction of sensual impulses.”⁴

⁴ Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Abingdon Press, 2001), p. 34.

Homosexual intercourse is an obstacle to the Fullness found only in Jesus Christ. In fact, it is an empty replacement for the Good Design of the Creator. So for anyone to seek happiness and fulfillment in homosexual activity is exchanging the Truth of God for a lie- just as Paul said in **Romans 1**- which is patently an utter rejection of the Creator- which is idolatry.

And what we have to understand and assay is that God's Judgment on homosexual and lesbian relationships is not because God is a killjoy- but because God is passionately opposed to whatever kills eternal Joy.⁵ The Fullness of Joy that is promised in Jesus Christ can only be found when we struggle *against* all the various lusts of our flesh by the Power of the Holy Spirit to be found humbly and joyfully submitted to God's created Standard of sexuality- not when we *oppose* them or *ignore* them or *exchange* them.

Heterosexual sins along with homosexual sins are ultimately rooted in a dysfunctional concept of worship that robs the soul of Joy here on this earth right now while robbing God of the Glory that is due Him. And that would be bad enough- but because it does that- it also robs the one engaging in sexual sins any eternal Joy as well. The Fullness of Joy that we all long for- is reserved *only* for those sinners who, by God's Grace alone, have been *healed* from this dysfunctional kind of worship, and who are rightly restored to their Creator through Jesus Christ, and who turn away from any manifestation of selfishness that strives to rebel against the Created Order.

But the Gospel of Jesus Christ offers us victory for our dysfunctional worship. By Christ's Death and Resurrection and through our union with Him- we obtain both the desire and the power to turn away from the wisdom of our own eyes, we turn away from all idols, and we turn away from anything that contradicts God's beautiful Design.

And because of the miracle of the New Birth- we *continue* to struggle against sinful sexual impulses- in all of their manifestations- along with every other impulse that brings God no Glory. And we fight these manifestations of our fallen condition *together*- as brothers and sisters in Christ- and as people who look forward to the day when all temptations will be gone and we will enjoy eternal Pleasures forever in

⁵ John Piper, sermon, "[Let Marriage Be Held in Honor Among All](#)" (August 11, 1991).

the Presence of our Savior. And that is why 3,000 years ago King David wrote:

Psalms 16:11

You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

... and that's why this topic matters- because God's Glory and our eternal Happiness is ultimately what's at stake in the homosexuality debate. So let's look at these points:

There is no such thing as so-called "same-sex marriage" and we should not call it that.

And the point here is not only that so-called same-sex marriage *shouldn't* exist, but that it *doesn't* exist. And it *doesn't* exist because it *can't*. Those who believe that God has spoken to us truthfully in the Bible should resolutely refuse to acquiesce that any committed, life-long partnership and sexual relations of two men or two women is a "Marriage". It isn't. God has already created and defined Marriage. And it isn't what people are saying today. What God Himself sovereignly joined together in that Creation and in that Definition, *cannot* be separated, and still be called "Marriage" in God's Eyes- and, therefore, it should be that way in our eyes either. Now please turn with me to read **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**:

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Now the correct context of this Passage is that Paul is showing the Corinthians Church the Power of the Grace of God as it has delivered them out of all sorts of wickedness in their lives before they were saved.

And so he starts out by using the word “**unrighteous**” at the beginning of verse 9. And so the various behaviors that he lists at the end of verse 9 and into verse 10 are simply synonyms for what “**unrighteous**” looks like.

Now I am going to get into this in great detail next week- but the very last word in verse 9 was translated here in the NASB as “**homosexuals**”. The King James renders this same Greek word as “abusers of themselves with mankind”. It is the Greek word *arsenokoiti*, and it is where the rubber meets the road. Everything we believe and teach about homosexuality hangs of what this word actually means. Those Churches and theologians who have affirmed homosexuality say that this word refers only to violent rape or the imposed sexual union between a master and young slave boys, and has nothing to do with loving, long term homosexual relations. But this word literally means: “*men bedding men*” which is *why* it is rendered the way that it is in various English translations.

But I want you to notice that homosexuality is not the only sin mentioned in these two verses. Along with men who bed men- there are:

- ✓ Fornicators
- ✓ Idolaters
- ✓ Adulterers
- ✓ Effeminate
- ✓ Thieves
- ✓ Covetous
- ✓ Drunkards
- ✓ Revilers
- ✓ Swindlers

... and Paul says that those who continually and unrepentantly engage in these behaviors prove that they are not saved and so they will not inherit the kingdom of God. And then he said,

Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

And by using the past tense term “were” here- Paul is teaching that these people were saved and are no longer engaged in these sinful behaviors. So behavior like this that is *continual* and *celebrated* applies to people who have *not* been washed and sanctified by Jesus and the Spirit of God- *not* to those who have been.

Now all of these unrepentant sins are the *same* in the sense of God’s Righteous Judgment. They *all* deserve His Wrath. And we’re constantly reminded that “**such were some of you**” (1 Corinthians 6:11), meaning those who are now washed and justified and sanctified.

And yet at this moment in history- contrary to all the other sins listed here- homosexuality alone- is being celebrated by our larger society with pioneering excitement. It’s seen as a good thing and as the new hallmark of societal progress. And we need to ask why that is.

As far as I know- none of these other sins are applauded so aggressively by whole groups of people who advocate for their normalcy. Sexual immorality is no longer the “tip of the spear” for the progressive push. Adultery is still frowned upon by many- even among the lost. Accusations of greed will still smear a candidate’s political campaign. Thievery is still not openly embraced. And as far as I can tell- there are no official initiatives saying it’s okay to go take things that don’t belong to you. There’s no such thing as a “drunk agenda” yet. Most people aren’t proud to choose a beverage over stability, and there aren’t any petitions that I am aware of that say the government should abolish the driving restrictions of inebriated individuals. Reviling others still isn’t seen as the best way to win friends and influence people. And swindling, especially on a corporate level, usually gets someone thrown into jail. In fact, the infrastructure of the American economy depends upon, in some measure, our shared disdain for conniving scammers.

So with the possible exception of fornication- all the sins listed here by Paul are still seen in a pretty negative light. But not homosexuality- where those who are now speaking the loudest about our not only *accepting* it, but actually *celebrating* it- hold positions of prominence and great influence. So according to what *they* say- homosexuality is different- even from other sexual sins. And I don’t think that is simply an accident.

But as Christians, we believe- with deepest sincerity- that the act of homosexuality itself keeps people out of the Kingdom of God. And if our society changes to celebrate and accept it with open arms- we

simply cannot both be loving and silent- because too much is at stake. And that means that it is a gross oversimplification to say that Bible believing Christians are simply "*against homosexuality*". We are against *any* sin that Scripture resolutely declares dishonors God and separates people from everlasting Joy through Jesus Christ.

Yet the very practice that God has condemned clearly and repeatedly is getting all the press because, at least at this cultural moment- it's the main sin that is so freshly endorsed by the "powers that be". So should we be concerned that in the future there might well be a new cultural agenda that would champion and promote thievery, for example- which would "cry out" against all the unfair pressure on thieves and how society at large has made those who steal feel so uncomfortable. And if that were to occur- I will tell you that Christians would see the need to speak out against that as well.

The point that I am making is that Bible believing Christians don't have some "hang up" or some preconceived bias that warps our sense of justice and fairness. That simply is not true. Our rejection and repulsion against homosexuality is the same as it is with stealing- God calls it sin. So the issue is not that believers have to be reeducated to remove our dysfunction- the issue is sin and the fact that God has called us to not only *not* engage in sin ourselves- but to cry out against it wherever it is found- whether that is the pulpit or the corner store or our own home.

We're against sin. And we are against sin because we know that Scripture declares that all unrighteousness- all sin- will keep people out of the Kingdom of God. And *that's* what should make our voice so unique when we speak into this debate.

Some would like to see this whole issue of homosexuality divided into two camps: those who celebrate it and those who hate it. And to be sure- both of these groups exist in our society. There are the growing numbers, under great societal pressure, who praise homosexuality or who are at least afraid not to. And we might call them "the left". And then there are the people who supposedly hate homosexuality- with the most bigoted rationale that stands apart from any truly Biblical concern. And we might call them "the right".

And the current national debate is plagued by this binary lens. Those on the left try to lump everyone who disagrees with them into that right side. And so they say, "*If you don't support- you hate*".

Meanwhile, many on the right see compromise and spinelessness in anyone who doesn't get red-faced and militant. And so they say, "*If you don't hate- you support.*"

But true followers of Jesus Christ will steadfastly refuse to walk on either path. And that is true because we have something to say that no one else *is* saying and that no one else *can* say.

Distancing ourselves from both the left and the right- we don't *celebrate* homosexual practice, we *acknowledge God's clear revealed Word that it is sin*. But we don't hate those who embrace homosexuality- *we love them enough to not just collapse under the societal pressure*. We speak the Truth in Love into this confusion, saying, simultaneously, "*That's wrong*" and "*I love you.*"

So we are not the left because we say, "*Homosexuality is wrong.*" But we're not the right either. And so we say, "*You're loved, come to Jesus and repent and He will save you.*" The Church of Jesus is the only voice in the world that speaks Good News- with those sweetest, deepest, most glorious Words of the Cross- the very *same* Words that God spoke us- when some of those very things were true about us- "*You're wrong, and you're loved.*"

God tells us we're wrong- that the payment or the wages of sin is eternal death. God is *always* faithful to tell us that unrepentant rebellion *always* results in Judgment. So yes, God says those things. And so must we. But that's not *all* God says. God *also* says that our Rescue from that Damnation and Judgment required Him to take on flesh and pay it for us in His Son (**Romans 3:23; John 3:36; Galatians 3:13**). And God tells us that we're loved- that even while we were yet sinners- in the blackest night of our existence- that it was *then*- that Jesus died for us. God says that while we were unrighteous- in doing whichever one of those sins that Paul connected to being unrighteous- that Jesus suffered in our place. And God also said that even though we were destined for Wrath- Jesus welcomes us into Glory (**Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 2:1–7**).

You're wrong and you're loved- that's the *unique* voice of the Christian Church- not just for the homosexual- but for all who fit Paul's description of "unrighteous". That's what *we* say- and we say it- not only because the Bible says it- but we say it because we were the very people to whom God said it.

And that must be *our* Message in this debate. So when society's elites despise us and when pop songs vilify us- when no one else has the resources to say anything outside of those two extremes- the Church- as the City set on a hill- has the incomparable opportunity to let the Gospel shine- to reach out in Grace and say: Yes, *you're wrong and you're loved*. We are the only ones who get to say *this*. And that is why homosexuality is *not* like other sins, and that is why we have added these two statements to our Doctrinal Statement and By-laws:

We believe and teach that the Holy Bible declares in both the Old and New Testaments that faithful heterosexuality within the Covenant of Holy Matrimony is God's revealed Will for all Mankind and is the one single Divine Standard of human sexuality that honors and glorifies God to which God calls all of the human race and to which He holds them all accountable.

We believe and teach that the Christian Church should reach out in Love and Truth to minister to people touched by sexual sin, and that those who contend Biblically against their own sexual temptations should be lovingly and patiently assisted in their battle- not ostracized or disdained. This loving and patient assistance is available to all those who freely denounce their sin and who are actively struggling to overcome it with the guidance of Church Leadership- *not* those who continue in their sexual sin or who celebrate it without genuine godly sorrow that will lead to repentance. However, the more prominent a leadership role or modeling role a person holds in the Church- the higher will be the expectations for God's Ideal of sexual obedience and wholeness. We affirm that both heterosexual and homosexual persons should find help in the Church to engage in the Biblical battle against all improper sexual thoughts and behaviors. (1 Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 6:1&2; 2 Timothy 4:2)

It contradicts Love and the Gospel of Jesus to approve of homosexual practice, whether by silence, or by endorsing so-called same-sex marriage, or by affirming the Christian ordination of practicing homosexuals

And we have to be strong and not be intimidated here. The world is going to say the very opposite of what is actually true about us. They are going to say that warning people who practice homosexuality about final Judgment is hateful. But it is *not* hateful. Hate does not want people to be saved. Hate does not want people to join the Family. Hate wants to destroy. And sin destroys.

If homosexual practice (and greed and idolatry and reviling and drunkenness) leads to exclusion from the Kingdom of God — as the Word of God says it does- then warning people to repent and forsake that sin is the very epitome of genuine Love. Because true Love doesn't allow people that we care about to run into hell without us pleading for them to repent. Love comes alongside those who need it the most, but who want it the least and does all it can to help a person live- forever. And that is why we have added this Statement to our Doctrinal Statement and By-laws:

We believe and teach that whatever biological or familial roots of sexual deviation from the one single Biblical Standard that may or may not be discovered in the future- these findings would not sanction nor would they excuse ungodly sexual orientation, thoughts, or behavior in any way- nor would they alter God's Condemnation of it. However, they *would* deepen our compassion and patience for those who are struggling to be free from sinful sexual orientations, thoughts, and practices.

The Good News of Jesus is that God saves heterosexual and homosexual sinners who trust Jesus, by counting them Righteous because of Christ, and by helping them by His Spirit to live lives pleasing to Him in their disordered brokenness.

After warning the Corinthians not to fall back into lives of sinful practice Paul says this in **1Corinthians 6:11**:

Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

This is the very "heart" of Biblical Christianity. "Such were some of you." There were Christians in the Church at Corinth in the 1st Century who were fornicators and adulterers and thieves and drunkards- and homosexuals. And they were not driven away- they were folded in.

But the way, they were folded in was *not* by the Church changing the definition of sin. And they were not folded in by the Church simply refusing to deal with the issue. No, the one single way in which all unrighteous people were folded into the Church at Corinth was that

they were **“justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”**

In other words- they put their trust in Jesus, they turned from their practice, these unrighteous people renounced the sinful pursuit of their fallen desires- which is what repentance means- and they trusted in the finished Work of Jesus Christ- and God justified them. And God imputed to them the very Righteousness of Jesus Christ, and counted them acceptable in His sight and adopted them into His Family- *our* Family- the Church.

And Paul said they were washed. Which means that God took away all their guilt and shame. The Apostle Peter said,

1 Peter 2:24

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

So when these unrighteous people trusted in Jesus and all that Jesus did- all their sins were washed away- including homosexuality.

And then Paul said they were “sanctified”- which means that God set them apart for Himself and gave them His Spirit so that they would *keep on* repenting and *keep on* struggling against sexual temptation, and so they would *keep on* living lives to God’s Glory. And God the Spirit was powerfully working in them that made them free and that empowered them to press toward Biblical Holiness on purpose- so that all their disordered desires would be swallowed up in something greater and more beautiful and more desirable, and so that they could walk in a way pleasing to God- even in their fallen flesh.

The Heart of Christianity is that God saves sinners through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. And the best news in all the world is that Jesus Christ died and rose again so that the most bizarre sexual sinner- be he homosexual or heterosexual- can be rescued from his path of destruction and be washed, justified, sanctified, and given a place in God’s all-satisfying Presence, by faith in Jesus Christ. That is the heart of our Message.

Do not make the Church a political activist organization. Pray that the Church and her ministers would feed the flock of God with the Word of God centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and risen. Expect

from your shepherds- not that they would rally you behind political candidates or legislative initiatives- but they would point you over and over again to God and to His Word, and to the Cross.

Please try to understand me when I say this: When I warn against the politicizing of the Church, I do so not to *diminish* her Power in the culture- but to *increase* it. The impact of the Church for the Glory of Christ and the Good of the world does *not* increase when she shifts her priorities from the Worship of God and the Winning of souls and the Nurturing of faith and the raising up of new generations of disciples.

If the whole counsel of God is preached with power- week in and week out- Christians who are citizens of heaven and citizens of this democratic order will be energized as they ought to be- to speak out and act for the common good. And I want to serve you like that. And so does Andy Kuhn and Vern Follis.

Marvin Olasky is the editor of World Magazine- which is TIME Magazine with a Biblical Worldview. And back in 2012- Olasky wrote this:

“Wise Pastors prompt [Christians] to form associations outside the Church, and leave the Church to its central task from which so many blessings flow. That pattern in the 18th and 19th centuries worked exceptionally well. New England Pastors in colonial times preached and taught what the Bible said about Liberty, and the Sons of Liberty- not a subset of any particular Church- eventually sponsored a tea party in Boston harbor. Pastors through America during those centuries preached about Biblical poverty-fighting, and in city after city Christians formed organizations such as (in New York) the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.” (*WORLD*, June 16, 2012, 108)

Dear friends- we need to be absolutely amazed every single day that we were ever saved. And then we should be flabbergasted that we stay saved and that we stay hungry and thirsty for Righteousness. And that amazement will compel us to preach and teach and live and think and labor so that Jesus Christ will be exalted and known and loved and enjoyed by every single one of God’s elect- even those who are enslaved in terrible and dark sins.

So I will say to you that these are powerful days- days of great upheaval and change. And yet these are the days that God allowed us to be born and live. And so when God passed by and saw us polluted in our own blood- He said to us, "Live!" And by God's Grace- we heard His Voice and in the very same way that God spoke and Light shined out of darkness- God's Voice pierced our hearts and He raised us up out of the depth of our depravity and washed us in His Own Blood and gave us of His Own Spirit and called us His.

And so we must not waste this time. We must not say, *"What will happen to me if I say this or do this."* We must say, *"What will happen to them if I do not"*. And so we must speak and live and act and think Biblically- so that all may hear and know- so that when Jesus returns- He will find us faithful to Him, and fruitful in His Kingdom;, and busy in the Work of the Lord- so He will say to us-

Matthew 25:21

Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.

Let us be watchful and quicken our pace.

Amen. Let's pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.