

## The Bible And Homosexuality

Franklin Church of Christ  
Edwin Crozier  
April 4, 2004  
AM Worship

### Introduction:

We cannot open our newspapers today without reading a story about homosexuality. We may read about judges allowing civil marriages for homosexual couples. We may read about active homosexuals being appointed as bishops in certain denominations or active homosexuals being tried by a denomination's judicial system. Of course, the biggest fear among the "Christian community" today is that homosexual marriage will become legal. The biggest shock among the "Christian community" is that some people in the "Christian community" think legalizing homosexual marriage would be good. For those among us who are convinced that the Bible claims same gender sexual activity is sinful, we are amazed that Bible believers can hold a different position. Because of our amazement, we often end up in heated shouting matches, lobbing Bible verse grenades but making no headway. The reason we make no headway is because this issue is not fought and won based on particular verses. In fact, the battle has already been fought and won with people on both sides long before they ever read the specific verses that say anything about homosexuality. We need to wage the battle where it needs to be waged. We want to consider what is causing people who claim to believe the Bible to accept homosexuality. After dealing with those issues, we will take a look at what the Bible actually says about homosexuality. However, before we address either of those issues, I want to calm your fears regarding our present political climate.

### Discussion:

- I. The two most important points to remember about our present civil and political controversy.
  - A. First, we live in a democracy. Because we live in a democracy, we are allowed to have our personal political opinions regarding every issue. We are allowed to believe that certain activities ought to be illegal or legal. We are allowed to form our opinions from whatever basis we may choose and no one is allowed to take that from us. At the same time, those around us are also allowed their views. In the end, we will vote on these matters or vote for candidates who will affect which way these matters may go civilly. While we or others may protest the outcomes, while we may try to overturn them, in the end our society will speak and the laws will be set and there is extremely little we can do about it except cast our own votes if we choose.
  - B. Second, in **John 18:36**, Jesus claimed that His kingdom was not of this world. Brethren, I am proud to be an American. I am convinced that this is the greatest physical nation that has ever existed on the face of the earth. I love my country. But, Jesus did not die to make Americans. He died to make Christians, forgiven people. No matter what path our society takes, our citizenship is in heaven (**Philippians 3:20**). While I certainly support the efforts of every individual who wants to make sure that Washington supports the Bible description of marriage, we need to remember that God did not give us the Bible in order to take it to Washington. He gave us the Bible in order to hide it in our hearts and to help hide it in the hearts of the individuals around us (**Psalms 119:11**).
  - C. With these two points in mind, we remember that Paul did not have the luxury of living in a democracy. Nor did he have the luxury of even trying to remotely argue that he lived in an empire founded on biblical principles. But the Gospel was still having success—even the enemies of the cross could see this (**Acts 17:6**). Further, we look at our own society and can notice how many sins are legal—adultery, abortion, covetousness (lottery), outbursts of wrath, drinking alcohol and drunkenness, on and on the list goes. But the Gospel continues to save individuals out of these sins, causing them to repent no matter what our government says. This is what we must focus on. Bringing sinners to repentance, no matter what our society says is legal. In fact, we need to recognize that souls will not be saved by making a sin illegal. They will only be saved by bringing them to repentance. That is our job.
- II. What is causing the modern "religious" controversy?
  - A. As I mentioned earlier, the real controversy regarding the Bible and homosexuality is not fought and won with the passages that say anything about homosexuality. We have to discuss more fundamental issues first and then what the Bible says becomes abundantly clear. We have to clear up three very important misunderstandings first.

B. People do not understand the Bible.

1. Clearly, in one sermon I cannot possibly cover every aspect of how we got the Bible, why we can trust the Bible and how to use the Bible. However, I can point out some basic issues that are misunderstood that affect our discussion of homosexuality.
2. First, we need to understand that the Bible, while penned by men, was actually authored by God Himself (**II Peter 1:20-21**). Therefore, when we read the Bible we cannot discount what is said based on the limitations that the men may have had. Paul may have been ignorant of a great many things, but the Holy Spirit who moved Paul to write was not and is not (*cf.* **I Corinthians 14:37; Galatians 1:11-12; Ephesians 3:3-4**).
3. Secondly, we need to understand that what was written is not subject to our own personal opinions. Again, according to **II Peter 1:20-21**, the writers were not writing their personal opinions and therefore we are not simply allowed our personal opinions. Rather, we must work to understand the scriptures and handle them accurately, otherwise we will face destruction (**II Peter 3:16**).
4. Thirdly, we need to understand that the scripture is all we need to determine what we ought to teach about this issue and any other. **II Timothy 3:16-17** says the scripture will make us perfect, thoroughly furnished for every good work. If it equips us to commit homosexuality, fine. But if not, we cannot turn to other sources to legitimize it. Do not misunderstand me, as I know some will. Certainly, we must use logic, reason and common sense as we look to the Bible. Certainly, we must keep the scripture in context and even in its cultural context. However, we are not allowed to take the sociological and psychological studies of men and use them to change the Bible message. We must recognize that real science and the real teaching of the Bible will always coincide.

C. People do not understand sin.

1. What is sin? According to **I John 3:4**, sin is lawlessness. Whenever I violate God's law, I have sinned. But we must dig deeper. What causes us to sin? According to **James 1:13-15**, sin begins with my personal desires.
2. What is the great spiritual battle for every Christian? The flesh vs. the spirit. **Romans 8:1-12** describes this battle. **Galatians 5:16-26** also demonstrates this. We are to crucify our flesh, along with its desires to do what God wants us to do, no matter what our flesh wants.
3. Why does all of this matter regarding the debate on homosexuality? Because the great defense of homosexuality among the "Christian community" is that homosexuals are born that way. They have a great desire that they cannot help because it is genetically wired in their flesh or because they did not develop properly in the womb. First, that has not been proven, no matter what you have heard. Second, even if it is proven, how does that make homosexuality different from every sin? Every sin we commit, we do so because we have a desire in our bodies. Our flesh wages war against our spirit. One of them must win out. We must sow to the spirit and live by the spirit, putting to death our fleshly desires. Those who want to commit homosexuality want to make it sound like we are asking them to do something we do not ask anyone else to do. That simply is not the case. We are asking them to do the same thing we ask the ones who are naturally drawn to alcohol, to fornication, to lying, to outbursts of anger, etc. We are asking them to sacrifice their fleshly desires in order to submit to the Spirit. Remember what Paul further said in **Galatians 6:7-8**. We will reap what we sow. If we sow to the flesh, as the homosexual wants to do, we will of the flesh reap destruction. However, if we sow to the spirit, we will reap eternal life.

D. People do not understand the issue.

1. If you begin to talk to people about why they support homosexuality, you will quickly find that a lot of people simply do not understand what the issue is.
2. Some will say that God loves everyone, therefore we ought to love everyone. But that is not the issue. I could not agree with any statement more than this one. But this is not the issue. Certainly God loves everyone. **Romans 5:8** demonstrates that God loves sinners and sent His Son to die for us. The issue is not does God love homosexuals, the issue is does God claim homosexuality is a sin for which we need the blood of Christ to forgive us.
3. Some will say that we are not allowed to hate anyone. Therefore, we should not hate homosexuals. I agree with this statement too. But again, that is not the issue. Today the

proponents of homosexuality present a false dilemma. They act as though we must either accept homosexuality as godly or we are tyrannical, homophobic bigots and hatemongers. That is just not the case. We must not hate, but love all mankind. The issue once again is not about hate, but about teaching. Should we, because we love them, teach homosexuals the Gospel of Christ and exhort them to repent.

4. Some will say that we should not judge others. God is the judge. They will even appeal to scripture for this (**Matthew 7:1**). However, this is not the issue. Clearly, neither you nor I will ever be the judge. We will not declare the sentence of eternal damnation or eternal life to anyone. But every one of us must make judgments about what we are going to teach is right or wrong. **John 7:24** says we must make righteous judgments. Further, are not the people who claim we should accept homosexuality as lawful making a judgment when they judge homosexuality as acceptable? Why are they allowed judgment but I am not.
5. Some will say that we are not allowed to tell people who they can love. That is not the issue. You can love anyone you choose. In fact, biblically you must love everyone (**Luke 10:27-37**). The issue is about who you can participate in sexual activity with.
6. Some will say that we are not allowed to tell people who they can marry. People ought to be able to marry anyone they wish. But that is not the issue. Because, in fact, everyone already believes that we are allowed to tell people who they can and can't marry. What if the man wanted to marry two sisters? Can we tell him, "No"? What if he wanted to marry your 12 year old daughter? Can we tell him, "No"? What if he wanted to marry his pet monkey? Can we tell him, "No"? The issue is not about telling people who they can marry, we already do that. Our government does that and will always do it. And we all believe it ought to be done. The issue is just about homosexuality, should it be sanctioned?
7. What is the issue? The issue is about God's plan for sexual fulfillment. Is it lawful to fulfill sexual desires with someone of the same gender? Once we determine what God's word says about that, everything else falls into place.

### III. God's plan for sexual fulfillment.

- A. God's plan for sexual fulfillment is spelled out with abundant clarity in **Hebrews 13:4**. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." God has provided for sexual fulfillment within the confines of marriage. Everything else, whether between people of the same gender or different genders, is immoral and will be judged by God.
- B. The Bible also defines marriage very clearly. In **1 Corinthians 7:1-9**, Paul demonstrated that the sexual desire is a natural one. He explained in **vs. 26** that because of the present distress, it would be good to overcome the sexual desires and remain unmarried. That is, because of the great persecutions these Christians were facing, it would be good not to be married. However, not everyone would have that gift (**vs. 7**). Therefore, in order to avoid sexual immorality and burning with passion, Paul said that each man should have his own wife and each woman should have her own husband. Interestingly, in the Bible, the word for wife is the word for woman. The word for husband is the word for man. The Bible views marriage as a union between a man and a woman.
- C. This is it. This is what God allows and sanctions. One man marrying one woman. One woman marrying one man. Further, this marriage is to be for life. According to **Matthew 19:3-9**, the Pharisees asked if they were allowed to divorce their wives for any reason and Jesus said, that what God had joined together, man was not allowed to separate.
- D. Please note something very carefully in **Matthew 19:10-12**. Those who support homosexuality today say that the teaching I am giving you is not fair. It is too hard for them. They will say, "Edwin, it is not fair. If you have sexual desire, you can marry a woman whom you want to marry. But for us, you are saying we have to do something we do not really want to do or we have to remain celibate." I want you to notice what the disciples said and how Jesus responded. They said, "Master, this is not fair. You mean we have to stay married to one woman for life. That is just not worth it. It would be better not to get married." Do you see what they are saying? They are saying they do not like the sound of God's marriage laws. Jesus responded, "Not everyone can accept this teaching. Those who cannot, better remain celibate." He makes this comment in very strong language saying that people who do not like the kingdom law on

marriage need to become eunuchs. I believe He was using that accommodatively to highlight what a difficult choice that would be to make. If Jesus would say that to men who did not want to have sex with the same woman for the rest of their life, how much more would He say it to men who did not want to have sex with women at all?

E. Finally, the New Testament does very explicitly condemn homosexuality.

1. **Romans 1:22-27** is very clear. Paul, demonstrating that Gentiles as a class of people were condemned as sinners, pointed out that Gentiles turned from worshipping the Creator to worshipping creatures. Because of this, God gave them up to uncleanness. He allowed them to go to the outer limits of sin, following the lusts of their heart and dishonoring their bodies among themselves. As an example of how far God let the Gentiles go, He said that the Gentile women and men gave up the natural use of each other's bodies and did what was unnatural. Men committed what was shameful with men. Women committed what was shameful with women. Modern religious proponents of homosexuality will tell us that Paul could not have been talking about homosexuality as we know it. Paul did not know that some people were just born homosexual. All Paul knew was people born heterosexual committing these acts. All Paul knew was temple prostitution that involved homosexuality. All Paul knew was abusive homosexuality. Paul did not know that some men and women might actually love someone of the same gender and that they might actually want to have a committed relationship. I am glad these modern scholars are here to tell us what Paul knew and did not know. I wonder how many conversations they had with Paul to find out what he knew and did not know. After all, just reading what is written it certainly sounds like a blanket condemnation of same gender sexual activity. After all, Paul did not include any caveats for love and commitment. He did not claim he was only talking about temple prostitution or abusive homosexuality. He just said, men with men and women with women is unnatural and shameful.
2. **I Corinthians 6:9-10** and **I Timothy 1:8-11** says that abusers of themselves with mankind or those who defile themselves with mankind (KJV) (sodomites—NKJV) will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Modern proponents of homosexuality will throw a smokescreen regarding the translations that use "homosexual" where the KJV uses "effeminate." That may or may not be a bad translation, but we are not considering that term anyway. Then they will start arguing about the use of the term "sodomite" and whether or not that is a good translation based on the story of Sodom. However, whether the etymology the word "sodomite" is sound or not, the term translated "sodomite" clearly refers to male same gender sexual activity. The word is "arsenokoites," which is a compound of the Greek words "arrhen," meaning "male" and "koite" meaning "couch, by extension cohabitation." Our modern word "coitus" which means "sex" comes from this Greek word. This is talking about men participating in sexual activities with men. Once again, some will try to say that this word specifically referred to homosexual temple prostitution. However, that is simply not true. There is nothing in the context of either passage that warrants this conclusion. Further, there is nothing regarding the historical use of this word that warrants this conclusion. While the word may have been used to describe homosexuality in pagan temple worship, it is a broad term that simply means men having sex with men. The only support for the view that this term only referred to pagan temple prostitution is wishful thinking on behalf of those who want to live their way instead of God's. Those who do so will not inherit the kingdom of God.

### **Conclusion:**

Brethren, we are not allowed to hate homosexuals. We are not allowed to discriminate against them by withholding the gospel message from them. In fact, we must love them, taking the gospel message to them just as someone brought the gospel message to us when we were sinners. We can have the comfort of knowing that the gospel can save sinners from every sin as **I Corinthians 6:9-11**. We must get the gospel out to every sinner. If you have submitted to this temptation, you are not less of a person than anyone here, no matter what some well-meaning but ignorant Christians might say. But you are a sinner, just like me and everyone else. You need the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Won't you repent and be converted today (**Acts 3:19**).