**GAY MARRIAGE OR NOT?**

Should Christians support gay marriage?

There are many opinions out there about 'gay marriage', but what does the Bible say about it? Just because the media highlights the popularity of marriage equality does that make it right?

One example of Christians supporting equality for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and

trans-sexual) individuals is:

The NALT Christian Project (Not All Like That)

Christians proclaiming their belief in full LGBT equality

Without an explicit directive from God to exclude and condemn homosexuals, the Christian community’s treatment of gay persons is in clear violation of what Jesus and the New Testament writers pointedly identified as one-half of God’s most important commandment: to love one’s neighbour as one's self <http://www.notalllikethat.org/taking-god-at-his-word-the-bible-and-homosexuality/>

Did Christ exclude and condemn sinners? When we find out how Jesus Christ treated sinners we will have an example to follow and put into practice.

 Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. According to God's word cond- emnation is a reality for those who walk after the flesh and not the spirit. Fleshly lusts that are pursued lead to sin. They are selfish desires that 'war against the soul' (1 Peter 2:11 ).

A verse that comes to mind is Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”. Sin as defined by God's word is :1 John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. That law referred to is the ten commandments given by God to Moses. Sexual sins are still sins. Any sexual or intimate involvement with another person outside the confines of marriage is a sin. This applies to heterosexuals and homosexuals alike. It could be fornication, it could be adultery, it could be sodomy. It could be consummated in a thought or the physical act because Jesus Christ himself said: Matthew 5:27  Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28  But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Christ clarifies with his listeners that even our thoughts can constitute sin.

A very important principle in Christianity is that of love. Love is the foundation of God's government. Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. The undeniable fact remains that God loves sinners. We all have sinned. But God desires that we, in response to his love and forgiveness, choose to stop sinning. Christ's treatment of a woman caught in adultery exemplifies this principle. In communication with Pharisees who had caught the woman in the very act of adultery and wanted to stone her, Christ demonstrated his total love for sinners. In his conversation with her accusers he was able to convict them of their sins.

John 8:7:  So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. Verse  9  And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

The phrase: Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more is an essential plea that Christ makes to all sinners. He wants us to STOP SINNING. This is an essential Biblical principle everyone needs to understand. Christ also made a similar point to a disabled man who had been in that condition for thirty eight years until he healed him by the pool of Bethesda.

John 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

This same principle was recorded by Solomon in the Old Testament:

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

It is not an easy thing to stop sinning. However Christ offers us His strength to do so. We cannot stop sinning without Christ's help. The word of God assures us that Christ will provide the strength if we will and desire to do what is right. His gracious promises abound throughout the word of God:

Phillipians 4:13: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Ephesians 3:16: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Ephesians 6:10: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Colossians 1:11: Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

Isaiah 45:24: Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed

2Corinthians 12:9: And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

In the very last book of the Bible the people who have recognised sin for what it really is and relied on Christ's strength and righteousness to reject the temptations around them are described thus:

Revelation 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

There are numerous promises to those that overcome in the book of Revelation (Rev 2: 7,11,17,26 and Rev 3: 5,11,21)

Today Christ stands at the door of our hearts knocking (Revelation 3:20). Christ is wait -ing for us to open that door and invite Him in. He wants us to seek His strength and might to overcome the sin in our lives. He loves sinners and shed His blood for all and offers forgiveness, compassion and mercy. Those sinners could be heterosexual, homosexual or have any other sexual orientation. He loves them all and desires to redeem them.

God is very clear in his Holy Word that sexual relations between same sex individuals is a sin. That is why God cannot approve of these sexual acts, even if they take place under the guise of man's new definition of marriage. God refers to sexual relations between same sex couples as an abomination.

 Leviticus 18:22: Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

Origin: act part of H8581

TWOT entry: 2530a

Part(s) of speech: Noun Feminine

Strong's Definition: Feminine active participle of H8581; properly something disgusting (morally), that is, (as noun) an abhorrence ; especially idolatry or (concretely) an idol: - abominable (custom, thing), abomination.

No amount of love, confetti and equality can make the sexual act between individuals of the same sex anything other than an abomination. A sinful act in the eyes of a holy God.

Revelation 21:10: And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,... Verse 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

When the new Jerusalem descends to the earth created new (Revelation 21:1) nothing that worketh an abomination enters into it. When the Israelites after their wilderness wanderings were about to enter Caanan God gave them the warnings contained in Leviticus 18 which included the specific reference to the abominable act of homosexual sex:

Leviticus 18:26  Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: 27  (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;)

It is interesting to note that the land was defiled by the abominations that the Caanan- ites indulged in. In the New Jerusalem "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth," (Revelation 21:10). The act of homosexual sex is clearly defined by the Word of God as an abomination and a defiling act. Sex between same sex couples is a sin. It is a sin whether committed inside or outside the confines of marriage. Just because the political juggernaut of marriage equality has taken root in numerous countries and redefined marriage according to their own dictates does not make it right in the sight of God.

 Malachi 3:6: “For I am the LORD, I change not.” It is amazing how many Christians do not like to recognise the messages and truths uttered in the Old Testament. But the same message is also found in the New Testament. God does not, and cannot change the underlying principles he has set forth since the beginning of mankind.

The discourse by Paul in Romans chapter one spells out exactly the same sentiments as expressed by God in the Old Testament:

Romans 1:24: Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27  And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30  Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,31  Without understanding, covenantbreakers, with-out natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Paul writes not only about homosexuality but lesbianism as well. Sexual intimacy was not designed by God to extend outside the context of a marriage relationship between a man and a woman as specified right back at the beginning of time in Genesis 2: 22:

And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23  And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24  Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Eve was brought unto Adam by God and the first marriage was created and blessed.

Paul notes in his discourse that it is "through the lusts of their own hearts" (Verse 24) that the sexual sins have taken hold.

James 1:14: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

James describes how lust is often the catalyst to sin. Paul echoes these same sentiments in Romans. Paul then goes onto describe how the truth of God has been changed into a lie. Christians who support gay marriage are participating in this very process. They have totally ignored the Word of God and supported the creation of their own version of marriage according to lust. Their own selfish desires are placed above the clear instructions and advice spelt out in the Word of God. The 'creature' or they and their selfish desires are placed above the requirements of their Creator God. They are participating in self adoration and self-worship.

Men and women are described by Paul as participating in these unseemly acts which will ultimately lead to receiving "that recompense of their error". As a result of them committing sexually depraved acts they will receive their reward from God. That reward is not one to be desired.

Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The reward for continuing to engage in sin and not wanting to stop sinning, no matter what sin it is, sexual or otherwise, can only lead in one direction - DEATH!

Have you heard Christ speaking to you? Have you heard the still, small voice of His spirit? Oh sinner, come home! His open arms of love accept you and say:

“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins,” Isaiah 44:22. “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:34. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:7. “In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.” Jeremiah 50:20

Just as Christ was able to minister to the woman caught in adultery and the disabled man by the pool of Bethesda, he is able to minister to any sinner today and he says:

John 8: 10 "where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin nomore."

 2 Corinthians 6:9  Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10  Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

What assurance here, of God’s willingness to receive the repenting sinner! Have you, reader, chosen your own way? Have you wandered far from God? Have you sought to feast upon the fruits of transgression, only to find them turn to ashes upon your lips? And now, your substance spent, your life-plans thwarted, and your hopes dead, do you sit alone and desolate? Now that voice which has long been speaking to your heart but to which you would not listen comes to you distinct and clear, “Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest; because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.” Micah 2:10. Return to your Father’s house. He invites you, saying, “Return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee.” Isaiah 44:22.COL205.1