

2nd Opinion: Is God a bigot?

Romans 1 & same-sex marriage

July 9, 2015

“It is one thing for the majority to conclude that the Constitution protects a right to same-sex marriage; it is something else to portray everyone who does not share the majority’s “better informed understanding” as bigoted.”

— Chief Justice John Roberts in his dissenting opinion on Obergefell v. Hodges

Texas Baptists are a people of The Book. We have no creed but Scripture.



Brent Gentzel We are aware [Matthew Vines](#) and others have sought to “change religion” through efforts that misconstrue Scripture as remaining silent on the question of consensual same-sex sexual relationships.

However appealing these new viewpoints may be to some, recent well-respected, well-researched evangelical authors like Texas Baptist [Jim Denison](#) and Christopher Yuan of Moody Bible College, who himself struggles with same-sex attraction, have convincingly confirmed the past 2,000 years of Christian theologians, pastors and philosophers didn’t get it wrong.

If you hold to a doctrine of biblical authority and believe the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible's authorship, you simply can't condone the act of homosexual sex. No matter how nice you want to appear to someone else, the God who loves us all and sent his Son to demonstrate that love clearly has put this sort of sexual expression out of bounds.

Regardless of the seemingly unassailable conclusions of the sexual revolution, sexual purity is the calling of every Christ follower, and the Bible clearly points toward celibacy as opposed to marriage as a viable option for some people in some circumstances. It should be remembered that Jesus chose celibacy. If someone is attracted only to people of the same sex, celibacy is the right and biblical path.

God's standards are for our benefit, not harm

Even if we don't fully understand these standards for sexual activity, we trust God's motive for establishing and repeatedly affirming these perimeters on the expression of our feelings have been set forth for our benefit and not for our harm. In like manner, our motive in how we deal with this new challenge always should be love for our neighbors as we remember it is never an act of compassion to condone or celebrate another person's sin.

The book of Acts reports on the Jerusalem Council. Upon the conclusion of early mission efforts in the Gentile world, the apostles and other early-church leaders gathered to discuss which ethical expectations would be essential for the church as it stepped beyond the Jewish world of its origin. Circumcision and a thousand other possible laws and moral imperatives were on the table that day, but at the end of their deliberation, the apostles and other first century leaders decided the gospel should go forth avoiding involvement in idol worship, blood, strangled meat and sexual immorality.

In a Roman world where there was more sexual licentiousness than we find

even in our own culture, Christians were to live and handle their bodies and passions in a distinctive way. Sexual intimacy as a gift to be expressed only in the confines of holy and heterosexual marriage has been the clear Christian way of exercising our faith and sexuality since that day.

I don't think the Supreme Court has the authority to overturn the work of the Jerusalem Council for my community of faith or for our Baptist institutions as they seek to express their religious convictions through the way that they create and maintain community.

Motive is love, not bigotry

Bigotry is not our motive, and our standard is higher than tolerance. We are a loving people, and our example and leader is a loving God. Calling his word and our exercise of that faith "hateful" doesn't change the fact love is the true motive. Capitulating in our free exercise of our faith in this area would be a mistake that will harm a lost world more than it harms us.

Challenging days are ahead for us as Texas Baptists. I encourage you to join me in praying for the leaders and boards of our Texas Baptist institutions. They have hard questions to answer.

- Can Baylor University possibly allow a gay couple to use married-student housing and still be a city on a hill that seeks to hold forth the Christian sexual ethic as a positive alternative to the world?
- Must Wayland Baptist University hire professors who engage in same-gender sex?
- Will Buckner International place a voiceless child in a home where homosexual sex is central to the adopting couple's life?
- In 10 years will they be helping a polygamous family?
- Can our churches possibly retain their tax-free status? If they do not,

will they become hotbeds of political action and promotion?

Like the early church, we can love and genuinely seek to bless neighbors who live in ways that are contrary to our faith, but we must not compromise our commitment to faithfully exercising our faith in an effort to be more acceptable to our government or those who are choosing a different path for their lives.

I believe calmer heads and wise leaders will find a way to protect the free exercise of religion in our nation. But even if our government comes against us, may God help us have the courage and compassion for our world to hold fast to the integrity of our faith and our long-held sexual ethic.

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