

Ohio State Issue One - A Christian Perspective

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Introduction

We continue today in our review of the surveys taken in September. One person, under the question "Please list three issues that concern you" answered "Society,(such as gay rights, marriage, our government)."

Last Tuesday, election day, we Ohioans voted on state issue one, the establishment of a state definition of marriage as being a relationship between a man and a woman. Before and after that election, I have been involved in discussions about this issue, with both Christians and non-Christians. To nobody's surprise, non-Christians are very confused about the issue, and take every possible position. It is disheartening, though, to hear the confusion that reigns among believers about this issue. I have had Christians tell me they voted for it. I have had Christians tell me they didn't believe in homosexual marriage, but that there was nothing wrong with civil unions. Clearly there is confusion among believers.

And so, for these 2 reasons - because it was mentioned in the survey, and because it is so recently in our Ohio headlines, I want to discuss this issue today.

This is a different class today. I'm not going to say much, other than to ask questions. I want you as a class to discover the answers to these questions, and so I'll simply ask questions to guide that process. Our only tool this morning will be the Bible.

You have to decide what you believe

In the Indiana Jones movie - "The Search for the Holy Grail," there is a scene where Indiana's father is shot by the bad guy in an attempt to force Indie into the cave to retrieve the grail. The bad guy looks at Indie who is now kneeling next to his dying father and says, "Only the grail can save him now. It's time to ask yourself WHAT YOU BELIEVE."

I suggest that we as believers are at that point. It's time to ask ourselves what we believe?

QUESTION - Why do you think that people believe homosexuality is an acceptable thing?

QUESTION - What kind of evidence has been promoted by the world, and accepted by the hearers, to indicate that homosexuality is simply an alternate lifestyle?

QUESTION - If the world of science, psychology, medicine, and public opinion all say one thing, and the Bible says another, which is right?

It's time to ask yourself what you believe.

Romans 3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

QUESTION - If 90% of Ohioans had voted to define marriage as something other than one man and one woman, would that majority define truth?

I Timothy 6:20-21 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

QUESTION - If 100% of scientists take a position that is contrary to the Bible, which is true?

Ask yourself whether you really believe that, for it is time for Christians to really get serious about this. Science is not God. There is bad science, false science, WRONG science. Only God is consistently and 100% true.

Jesus explains the source of all truth in His great high priestly prayer in *John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

I will not belabor this point, since we have covered it so often in the past. The Bible is true. Every word of it. When it is contradicted by external forces, no matter what

credentials they may seem to possess, the Bible is true, and those external sources are wrong. It is that simple, and we as believers need to get settled on that. After all, if the Bible is wrong in any area, it is likely wrong in others as well. If the Bible is wrong on this issue of same-sex marriage, then it is probably wrong about salvation, and you and I are lost anyway!

The Bible is true. That is the basis of our discussion this morning, and the reason why we will use only the Bible to deal with this issue.

What the Bible teaches about marriage

READ - *Genesis 1:26-28*

QUESTION - What does this teach about marriage? Does same-sex marriage fit into it at all? How?

READ - *Genesis 2:21-25*

QUESTION - Does this add anything to the discussion?

There are many references to marriage in our Bibles. Where the participants in that relationship are described, they are always clearly a man and a woman. There is no reference in the Bible to a marriage between anything other than one man and one woman.

QUESTION - Here is one more verse to consider before we move on. What does the following verse teach us about marriage?

READ - *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (Hebrews 13:4, KJV)*

To summarize the Bible's teaching on marriage, then:

- Marriage is a relationship between 1 man and 1 woman, established by God all the way back at creation.
- Marriage, as defined by God, is a good thing.

What the Bible teaches about homosexuality

I would like to present 3 clear passages on this subject for your consideration. The Bible is not silent on the issue, and actually speaks quite loudly about it. I suggest you jot down these references and study them on your own if you have additional questions about it.

READ - *Genesis 19:1-13*

DISCUSSION - Does this passage shed any light on the subject of homosexuality? What does it teach about the mind of God concerning this thing?

READ - *Romans 1:18-32*

DISCUSSION - Does this passage shed any light on the subject of homosexuality? In this passage, do you see any kind of progression in the sinful state of man?

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

DISCUSSION - Recognizing that the context of chapter 18 is sexual relationships, what does this verse teach? Does it shed any light on the subject?

To summarize, then, what we've discussed so far:

- Marriage is a relationship between 1 man and 1 woman, established by God all the way back at creation.

- Marriage, as defined by God, is a good thing.
- Homosexuality is clearly described in the Bible, always as a sin, NEVER as something that is even remotely acceptable as a lifestyle.

What should the response of the Christian be?

QUESTION - If these things be true, then why were so many Christians confused about how to vote on Issue 1?

Clearly, we as believers need to know what the Bible teaches and live it in every area of our lives. There is no part of Christianity that applies some of the time but not others. There is no time when we side with the world's viewpoint and against the Bible viewpoint. No time.

There is another issue that arises from this discussion, though, and that is the matter of our relationships to homosexual people, themselves. Perhaps you know some. I do. How we treat them is just as important an indicator of our Christian faith as what we believe about the subject of homosexuality itself. And so, let's conclude with a discussion about that topic.

DISCUSSION - How are we as believers to respond to a homosexual person? How should we treat them?

ILLUS - I found the following quote on the internet describing how some professing Christians treat homosexuals. What do you think of it? "A few years ago, I witnessed one of the most horrific sights I have ever seen. It happened while I watched TV coverage of the funeral of Matthew Shepherd. A group of professing Christians had traveled to Montana just to hold signs outside the funeral protesting the gay lifestyle. They taunted the victim's parents as they came out of the memorial service. They yelled at the parents that their son is now in Hell. They held up signs that said "God hates fags." Not only were they not representing the spirit of Christ, they were putting words in God's mouth, a dangerous practice, to say the least."

QUESTION - Does God hate homosexuals? What does He feel toward them?

ANSWER - Of course not. God loves you, He loves me, and He loves every single human being on this earth - INCLUDING HOMOSEXUALS. When Jesus died on the cross, He died for you and for me and for everybody - INCLUDING HOMOSEXUALS.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16, KJV)

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9, KJV)

Those verses apply to homosexuals the same as to anybody else. God loves them, sent His only Son to pay the price for their sin, and longs for them to repent and turn to Christ. When they do, they, too, can have the joy of a relationship with Him and eternal life.

QUESTION - Consider the following comments found in a message on this subject, and tell me what you think of them. Do these thoughts help you to understand how we as believers are to treat homosexuals? How?

QUOTE - If someone who has practiced homosexuality comes before God, confesses their sin in true repentance - they are forgiven. The Bible tells us our sins are washed away as if they never existed, and to God we are pure and clean. But what if someone says, "I am a homosexual. That's who I am and you need to accept me as I am." That person is saying that their behavior (their sin) is who they are. They are saying they are not sorry they are sinning. They are saying they are not going to stop sinning.

DISCUSSION - There is one more verse I want to consider on this subject, and it is *John 8:11*. After reading it, can somebody share how it helps us to understand the way we as Christians should treat homosexuals? After all, one of our key guides in life is WWJD. Here we see what He did in an example of a person involved in sexual sin.

QUESTION - Can somebody summarize our discussion, then? How are we, as individual believers, and as the church of Jesus Christ, to treat homosexual people?

Conclusion

I would summarize like this:

- Marriage is a relationship between 1 man and 1 woman, established by God all the way back at creation.
- Marriage, as defined by God, is a good thing.
- Homosexuality is clearly described in the Bible, always as a sin, NEVER as something that is even remotely acceptable as a lifestyle.
- Individual Christians are to treat homosexual people no differently than any other people. We are to witness to them, share the gospel with them, pray for them, love them as we do any other person in need of our Savior. Jesus came *to seek and to save that which is lost*, and we are to have the same heart. We are to love the sinner, even though the Bible clearly teaches we are to hate the sin. We are to accept the person as a man or woman for whom Christ died, and love them as He did, while never condoning nor accepting their sin.

The church is to accept homosexual people on the same basis it accepts all other people. When we confess our sins, repent of them, turn from them, and embark on the life of discipleship with Jesus Christ, we are accepted as members of the church of Jesus Christ. So with homosexual people. Repentance and salvation are a requirement with them, as with others.

DISCUSSION - Any closing discussion?