

Despite More Trouble, Jack Phillips Still Trusts God

You may recognize Jack Phillips. He's the Colorado cake artist who was at the center of one of the year's most-talked-about U.S. Supreme Court decisions. Although Jack won an important victory, the State of Colorado didn't get the message. It is targeting him again!

How did this happen?

For six years, Jack suffered. He faced threats and government punishment simply because he runs his business according to his faith. Jack declined a request to create a wedding cake celebrating a same-sex marriage.

Jack explained that he would be happy to design a cake for the customers for a different event, or sell them anything else in his shop. But he just could not create a cake expressing messages and celebrating an event that conflicted with his deeply held religious beliefs about marriage. Still, the couple filed a complaint, and the State of Colorado punished Jack for living in accordance with his faith.

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court finally gave Jack justice when it handed down its decision in *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*. Jack won in a 7-2 ruling that upheld his religious freedom.

In its decision, the Supreme Court made clear that the government had been hostile to Jack's freedom of religion. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote in the majority opinion that "the Commission's hostility was inconsistent with the First Amendment's guarantee that our laws be applied in a manner that is neutral towards religion." The Supreme Court decision made it clear that the government must respect and show tolerance for people of faith and their religious beliefs.

But although the highest court in the land ruled to protect Jack's freedom, he now faces a new threat from the state.

Tested Again

On the very day that the Supreme Court decided to hear Jack's case in June of 2017, an attorney called Jack's shop asking for a custom cake. The attorney wanted a cake that would be blue on the outside and pink on the inside in order to celebrate that attorney's transition from male to female.

Although it seemed obvious that Jack was being targeted and set up, he treated the lawyer the same way that he would have treated any other customer in that situation. Jack politely declined to create a custom cake expressing a message that conflicted with his faith.

Jack has never before created a cake like the one this attorney requested. He believes that God creates us male and female. This means our sex is a God-given, biological reality, not something we choose based on our feelings.

Once again, Jack acted based on his conscience. He did not turn his back on his beliefs about human sexuality. And he did not give in to those who would punish him for believing and living in light of this truth.

New Threats and Harassment

When Jack declined this request, the attorney filed a complaint with the same Colorado agency that prosecuted Jack before. The agency did not take a position on this complaint while the Masterpiece case was pending in the U.S. Supreme Court. But less than one month after the Supreme Court condemned the state's anti-religious hostility toward Jack in the first case, the state agency made its first finding against Jack in this new case. Obviously not getting the Supreme Court's message the first time, the state decided to target Jack again.

“The Supreme Court made it clear that Colorado can’t treat me worse than other cake artists because of my religious beliefs,” said Jack. “But I’m facing a new complaint for declining to create a custom cake that expresses a message I would not communicate for anyone—something Colorado has repeatedly said other cake artists have the freedom to do. Colorado just seems to be looking for opportunities to punish me for my faith.”

Enough is enough. Now, we’re taking it to the state!

Alliance Defending Freedom is defending Jack again. But this time, we’re not simply playing defense. We are going on offense. We have filed a lawsuit against the relevant state officials.

We have to put an end to this harassment.

Colorado’s anti-Christian hostility is showing itself yet again. The state has doubled down on its unconstitutional effort to punish people of faith. Jack just wants his life back. For six years, he fought for the right to run his business consistently with his faith. And just when he thought it was possible to go back to normal, the government is threatening him again.

State agencies should be fair and impartial to the people who are before them. But this agency is anything but that.

“It’s almost as if you can decline to create any expressive cake you want, so long as your name isn’t Jack Phillips,” said Jim Campbell, ADF Senior Counsel.

While the media has covered the Masterpiece case extensively, most people don’t know the real man at the center of this story.

Jack Had an Encounter with Jesus

Both Jack and his wife, Debi, were raised in churchgoing

families, but neither put much stock in what they learned. They started their own family with zero interest in anything related to faith.

But that all changed one morning as Jack finished a late shift and started driving home.

“I just felt like God came into my car and convicted me of my sins,” he says, recalling the conversation in his heart. “It just took a few seconds. ‘You’re a sinner. You need a Savior. It’s Jesus Christ.’ I said, ‘You’re right. Let me clean up my life.’ He said, ‘You can’t.’ I said, ‘You’re right. I’m Yours.’ So I gave my life to Christ, driving home from work.”

Telling Debi wasn’t so simple. Weeks before, she’d torn into a relative who invited them to visit her church. Jack figured if she learned of his conversion, she’d leave him.

But he couldn’t sleep. The voice in his soul kept urging him to tell her what he’d done. He walked out to the kitchen. “I need to tell you something,” he said. “I became a Christian today.” Tears come to his eyes, remembering what came next.

“Me, too,” she said. “Three days ago.”

Jack Wants to Honor God in His Business

For Jack and Debi, becoming Christians changed everything. So when Jack started his cakeshop in 1993, it was not only to provide for his family and his employees, but also to honor God through his work every day.

The very name of Jack’s shop—Masterpiece Cakeshop—not only reflects that Jack designs artistic cakes, but it’s a constant reminder to him that he operates his business in service to his ultimate Master—Jesus Christ.

Jack Has Always Been an Artist

When Jack opened Masterpiece Cakeshop, he wanted to use his

artistic talents to design custom cakes that were both imaginative and personal.

From an early age, Jack had developed his expertise in painting, drawing and cartooning. Now he had the opportunity to combine those gifts with his skills as a pastry chef to create beautiful works of art.

“I wanted customers to say, ‘Wow! This isn’t just a bakery ... it’s a place where you go to get a cake that’s art,’” Jack says.

“Masterpiece implies the artwork aspect, where we take the different artistic tools and colors and palettes to create the artwork,” Jack says.

Still Trusting in God

Jack was shocked the first time his business, his faith and even his family became the subject of threats and punishment. And now, even with an important Supreme Court victory behind him, Jack is facing government harassment once again.

After everything that’s happened, Jack continues to trust in God’s plan for his life and for the future of his business.

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Alliance Defending Freedom *is an alliance-building, nonprofit legal organization advocates for the right of people to freely live out their faith. ADF was launched in 1994 by 35 ministry leaders, including Dr. James Dobson, Dr. James Kennedy, Dr. Bill Bright and Larry Burkett.*

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