

Franklin Graham: Has the Gospel Lost Power in Our Culture?

I was deeply saddened but certainly not surprised when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its tragically flawed and immorally reasoned decision on same-sex marriage this summer.

It was obvious the liberal wing of the court had already predetermined the outcome of the *Obergefell v. Hodges* case, even though dozens of states over the past few years had passed marriage amendments—many of them by overwhelming margins—banning same-sex unions.

Indeed, both the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations supported the Defense of Marriage Act, which endorsed the traditional and historic view and rights of marriage between a man and woman. President George W. Bush even called for a constitutional amendment to further strengthen the historic definition of marriage. Bush said, “The union of a man and a woman is the most enduring human institution, honored and encouraged in all cultures, and by every religious faith.”

Yet under the zealous gay/lesbian activism of President Barack Obama—who in his first term actually opposed same-sex marriage—the floodgates of acceptance of this practice of sexual immorality were opened wide.

Never, though, would I have dreamed that our president would light up the White House with the vivid, bright rainbow colors of the gay movement. It was a deliberate, measured step by the president to flaunt and celebrate a disastrous ruling that blatantly defies God’s moral law.

I am reminded of the Bible’s admonition to the Romans, whose

culture had been rapidly descending into sexual chaos, especially with the overt, shameless practice of homosexuality. "... who know the righteous requirement of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death. They not only do them, but also *give hearty approval to those who practice them*" (Rom. 1:32, emphasis mine).

I cannot overstate what a dangerous era we have now entered. Immorality and depraved debauchery are not only endorsed by courts and political leaders, but these are joyfully celebrated. God's standards are mocked and ridiculed in the process, and the battle lines are clearly drawn for decades to come between a decadent, defiant culture and believers who are committed to the truth of the gospel.

The Scriptures state just how serious the rejection of God's truth can be for a people: "Where there is no vision, the people perish; but happy is he who keeps the teaching" (Prov. 29:18). The church of the Lord Jesus Christ provides culture not only with encouraging salt and light but also with a divine restraint on the spread of evil and wickedness.

Attempts to throw off biblical morality never result in the freedoms anticipated. The end is always increasing enslavement to immorality, a consequence that ultimately can lead to the demise of a civilization. Destructive behavior of every kind is gradually unleashed, ushering in increasing lawlessness and corruption. I don't think we realize the horror that awaits a people who rebel and reject God's authority.

Ironically, the very symbol the gay/lesbian movement has chosen—the rainbow—should remind us all of God's righteous judgment and His gracious, covenantal restraint until that Day. When the rainbow appeared after the flood to Noah, God's promise wasn't that He would never destroy the earth again—but simply that He would not use a worldwide flood to do so.

The rainbow came after the iniquity of man had become such a

stench in God's nostrils that God acted to cleanse the earth, sparing only Noah and his family. At Christ's return, the earth, the heavens and mankind will come under the intense judgment of God. "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat. The earth also and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10).

When the rainbow appears in the book of Revelation, it precedes the impending, unstoppable wrath that will come upon all who rebel against Christ.

The apostle John writes: "Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud and a rainbow on his head. His face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire" (Rev. 10:1). Unprecedented woes of God's end-time judgment have commenced, as Almighty God prepares a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness reigns and sin is forever banished.

Incredibly, as the severity of God's judgments escalate, rebellious and hard-hearted men continue to shake their fists in the face of God. "Men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues, and they did not repent and give Him glory" (Rev. 16:9).

As 2016 begins and our country prepares to elect a new president, I will be traveling to all 50 states to preach the only message that will save men and women and restore our country's heritage of faith—the gospel of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the cities I plan to visit is Des Moines, Iowa, where the state's caucuses are the traditional kickoff event for presidential campaigns. As candidates crisscross the Hawkeye State with messages and slogans they hope will resonate with

voters, I will proclaim Christ as “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). My hope isn’t in either the Republican or Democratic party. It’s in Christ alone.

Inscribed on an archway in the Capitol building in Des Moines is this remarkably relevant statement: “Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong.”

My prayer is that in every state, God will raise up committed, bold followers of Christ who will have the courage to run for local, state and national offices, and perhaps by the grace of God, overcome the spread of wickedness in our nation.

For while I do not understate the challenges that lie ahead for our nation and for the church in what is fast becoming (and perhaps already is) a post-Christian America, neither do I dare underestimate the power of the gospel. It convicts of sin and righteousness. It confronts those living in rebellion with truth and consequences. It transforms any person willing to turn from sin and put their faith in the Savior.

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ may increasingly be in the minority, but “the Lord is not limited to save by many or by few” (1 Sam. 14:6).

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