

Franklin Graham: This Is a Pivotal Moment in America's History

Obergefell v. Hodges. You may not be familiar with those names now, but by the end of June, this U.S. Supreme Court case will no doubt be mentioned in the same breath as the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973 that infamously led to the legalization of abortion across America.

The ruling due to be handed down this month comes after several federal courts ruled against a number of states that had banned same-sex marriages in state referendums, many of them by wide margins.

As the nine justices consider the weight and merit of the oral arguments that came before the court on April 28, the impending decision will rank as the most historic and far-reaching judgment of the 21st century.

Should the verdict favor the fanatical proponents of same-sex marriage, it will dramatically and fundamentally alter the moral fabric and future of the American family.

The imminent threat to the biblical, historical definition of marriage was clearly evidenced in the flurry of queries from the judges during the oral arguments.

Chief Justice John Roberts noted that redefining marriage would require changing the “fundamental core” of the institution, which is the “opposite-sex relationship.”

Justice Anthony Kennedy, considered by most to be the swing vote on the decision, asked if it was prudent to suggest the plaintiffs knew better than “millennia” of traditional culture and practice.

Justice Samuel Alito mentioned that although ancient cultures like Greece accepted homosexuality, traditional marriage was still considered distinct and their limitations on marriage to persons of the opposite gender had nothing to do with prejudice against homosexuals.

Alito also questioned the plaintiffs' lawyers, wondering aloud if the redefinition of marriage to include same-sex couples would not logically allow polygamous couples to marry: "What would be the logic of denying them the same right?"

Obergefell v. Hodges is before the Supreme Court following a ruling against same-sex marriage by the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Judge John Sutton, writing that court's majority opinion, powerfully articulated why the court reached its verdict: "For better or worse, or for more of the same, marriage has long been a social institution defined by relationships between men and women. So long defined, the tradition is measured in millennia, not centuries or decades."

Sutton went on to make this striking comment: "If it is constitutionally irrational to stand by the man-woman definition of marriage, it must be constitutionally irrational to stand by the monogamous definition of marriage."

The very fact that the U.S. Supreme Court is even considering a ruling on same-sex marriage reveals the depraved moral state of our nation. Just a decade ago, no one would have predicted the rapid ascent and outsized influence of the gay lobby. According to the most recent U.S. census, gay couples represent less than one-half of 1 percent of the population. By 2006, 33 states had laws modeled after the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act.

Regardless of the outcome, the Bible has the final, authoritative word on marriage. No justice, court, state, legislative body, or cultural opinion can change the divine purpose for marriage. It is a sacred institution. It is holy

matrimony designed by God for the glory of God.

Marriage, defined by God, is between one man and one woman. God created us "male and female" (Gen. 1:27). After fashioning woman from the rib of man, God declared, "Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife" (Genesis 2:24).

Jesus repeated those Old Testament Scriptures when questioned by the Pharisees on divorce, reiterating that from the beginning God has made the human race male and female, and as such they are to be joined together in marriage.

Above all, the Bible explains that not only is marriage a covenant commitment between a man and a woman, but marriage itself is ordained by God to reflect the relationship between Christ and His church.

The wife should submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ, and the husband should love his wife just as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:24-25). God has so designed marriage that its roles and functions are a beautiful picture of the Savior and His bride, the church. "This is a great mystery, but I am speaking about Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32).

The full-fledged attack on the institution of marriage by gay rights groups is in reality an assault on the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is driven by the forces of evil that hate the name of Christ.

This is a pivotal moment in the history of our nation. If the nation's highest court decrees same-sex marriage as the law of the land, the consequences will be grave. It sets the stage for persecution of believers who are committed to the truth of Scripture. Can pastors preach against homosexuality without being accused of hate speech? Can Christian schools and colleges deny housing to same-sex couples and maintain their tax-exempt status?

The ultimate danger, of course, is the devastating results of disobedience to God's Word. Continual blatant sexual immorality that shakes its arrogant, godless fist before Almighty God is a flashing red sign warning of the imminent disintegration of a culture.

Pray now. Pray fervently. Pray for the wisdom and counsel of God to work its way into the hearts and minds of the Supreme Court justices who are making this momentous decision.

God Himself is the final arbiter. "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us" (Is. 33:22).

Franklin Graham, *son of iconic evangelist Billy Graham, is the president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan's Purse.*

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