

Jesus and Same-Sex Marriage: Whose Side Is He On?

Throughout history, Jesus has been used to justify everything from the Crusades to the Spanish Inquisition to the suppression of women. Today, many on the social and political left, including President Obama, seek to use Jesus to justify their support of same-sex marriage. This should not be surprising, because Jesus is the greatest single moral authority of human history and if He can be seen as being on the side of same-sex marriage, then the proponents will likely win the day.

Proponents of same-sex marriage cannot, of course, point to any specific statement of Jesus advocating or even tolerating their position, so they focus on his emphases on love and tolerance. For example, I listened to a guest commentator on Fox News trying very hard to convince her audience that Jesus would not have opposed same-sex marriage. She kept saying, "Jesus was all about love." She then stated, "His final words were all about love." I thought to myself, "She has never read the gospels... her concept of love as a sugar-coated niceness that never challenges anyone's behavior is foreign to Jesus and the New Testament."

Yes, Jesus emphasized the necessity of love for God and one's fellow human beings, but He also warned that our choices and actions have consequences. To the woman caught in the act of adultery he spoke words of kindness and forgiveness, but his final words to her were, "*Go and sin no more*" (John 8:11). To the paralytic whom He healed at the Pool of Bethesda, He spoke words of caring and compassion, but concluded by saying, "*Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you*" (John 5:14). And let's not forget that it was Jesus who made a whip and drove the moneychangers, who were using religion to pad their pockets, out of the temple area (see John 2:13-16).

On the matter of same-sex marriage, Jesus did make His

position very clear, but one has to get beyond the superficial, political posturing to see it. Once we understand His position, it is then up to us to decide if we are going to be on His side or the side of popular, contemporary culture. We are free to choose, but our choice will have consequences.

Jesus Affirms the Original Genesis Model of Marriage

Jesus clearly affirmed that marriage is between one man and one woman in a discussion with the Pharisees about divorce (see Matt. 19:3-8). The Pharisees wanted to know if it was okay for a man to divorce his wife for any reason. Jesus answered by pointing them back to how it was *at the beginning* when God created humanity. According to Jesus, the Genesis account of the creation of the man and woman is to be the ongoing model for marriage since it reflects God's original intent.

In the Genesis account of creation, God creates a man and a woman and brings them together in a wonderful partnership of mutuality. They are blessed by the Creator and told to bear children and fill the earth. Both are given the same blessing, authority, and mandate as is indicated by the use of the plural pronoun "them" throughout the creation account (see Gen. 1:26-31). The man is created first and then the Creator takes a rib from the man (see Gen. 2:21) and fashions it into a woman. He then brings the two together and when the man sees the woman he breaks forth into what Hebrew scholars say is song or poetic verse, in Genesis 2:23:

*This is now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called woman
For she was taken out of man*

The Genesis writer then sums up the creation narrative in Genesis 2:24 with the words, *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

In this discussion with the Pharisees, Jesus keeps pointing them back to how it was *in the beginning*, showing that He saw the Genesis account of creation as the divine model for all

marriages. The Greek scholar, Marvin A Vincent, points out that the perfect tense of the verb used in this passage indicates that “the original ordinance has never been abrogated or superseded but continues in force” (Vincent, Vol. 1, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, 108).

Jesus sums up His argument by quoting Genesis 2:24 (see above) and saying, *Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate* or, as the King James Version reads, “put asunder” (Matt. 19:6). The modern supporters of same-sex marriage are seeking to “put asunder” the form of marriage that was instituted and blessed by the Creator at the very beginning of the human race, and affirmed by Jesus Christ.

We Must Follow the Creator's Plan

This “putting asunder” of the Creator’s plan for marriage will only lead to much pain for individuals and for society. For example, most manufacturers provide instructions with their product so that the purchaser can maintain the item and get the best use from it. An expensive garment may say on the label, “Wash by hand in cold water.” If the purchaser of that garment ignores the instructions and throws the garment into a washer and washes it in hot water, he should not be surprised if the garment is ruined. In the same way, we should not be surprised to see lives ruined and society negatively affected when we ignore the clear instructions of the Creator concerning how marriage should work. God gave instructions and principles, not to “rain on our parade” and make us miserable, but so that we could derive the maximum joy and fulfillment from the life he has given us.

Even if one rejects the Bible and Jesus as authoritative guides, it is obvious from nature itself that same-sex marriage is unnatural and out of harmony with the natural order. Even if you believe in evolution and the “survival of the fittest,” you must admit that it is heterosexual marriage that has survived and sustained the human race. In other words, what we see in the Genesis account of creation is in harmony with what can be observed in nature. This is what Cardinal Francis George and six bishops of the Chicago diocese were referring to when they spoke of the dire consequences of legally redefining marriage to include same-sex marriages, and

warned, "When the ways of nature and nature's God conflict with civil law, society is in danger. It is to that danger that we direct your attention."

Because same-sex marriage is so out of sync with nature and common sense, all major religions have condemned the practice as have societies in general throughout history. Only in our modern Western society where all transcendent authority has been rejected and morality is relativized to whatever "I" want it to be, has there been such a push to make the abnormal the normal.

Speak the Truth in Love

In Ephesians 4:15, Paul said that we, as believers, should be about the business of *speaking the truth in love*. The arrogant and angry verbal attacks on homosexuals by some who call themselves Christians is not the Spirit of Christ and should be rejected. On the other hand, a superficial niceness that flinches from telling the truth must also be rejected. If the surgeon pulls back the knife and does not plunge it in and remove the cancer because the patient flinches and cries out, he has not acted in love. Leaders, both religious and civic, who are unwilling to tell the truth for fear of criticism and loss of popularity are like the leaders of Israel in Jeremiah's day of whom God said, *They have also healed the hurt of my people slightly (superficially), saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace* (Jer. 6:14).