

Reclaiming the Covenant Rainbow

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7).

On June 26, 2015 the Supreme Court made a historic decision: states cannot ban same sex marriages. Since then, we've heard each side voice their views on the issue. Be it TV, radio, social media or face-to-face, the arguments are passionate. And they've gotten ugly. Really ugly.

Most of the discussions include phrases like: "It's a sin," "Everyone sins," "That's not love," "I'm not judging," and so on. As one points out the other's self-righteousness, they slip into their own double standard, blind to personal hypocrisy.

Folks on both sides are angry. Just check out a few posts on social media to see unkind, even vicious words exchanged between "friends." Yet most of the arguments are missing a major point. The issue is not whether we can rank order sin. Neither is it in figuring out what constitutes judging. Focusing on such topics makes us miss the big picture.

What is the big picture? Ordinances. Biblical ordinances. God's ordinances.

Ordinances are God's rules. They are instructions on how we should behave. They are His laws. Period. And like an excellent Father, God is not required to justify His rules for our sake. We trust His ordinances because we trust Him. We obey His ordinances because we love Him.

Unfortunately, we break God's rules all the time. It's part of our "flesh" nature to do so. The first ordinances issued by God to mankind were in the Garden of Eden. One of them said

“Don’t eat from this tree.” Seems simple enough. Not too much to follow. Yet Adam and Eve chose to dismiss it.

We humans are masters at rejecting God’s ordinances. Just consider:

- **THE SABBATH.** God said to reserve the seventh day of the week for Him. Keep it holy. Worship and rest. But what do we do? We work, we shop, we skip church.
- **LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR.** Jesus clarified the meaning of “neighbor” in the parable of the Good Samaritan. In America, however, hatred is widespread and racism prevails. Let’s not forget the week before the SCOTUS decision, nine people attending Bible study were killed for being black.

And then there’s the issue of marriage. The *biblical* ordinance is without debate: marriage is monogamous and heterosexual. And this biblical ordinance has been violated for a long, long time. Even as far back as the patriarchs. Remember Leah and Rachel, the sister wives of polygamous Jacob? And let’s not forget Solomon who took 700 wives from surrounding nations. In his mind polygamy was a shrewd diplomatic move. For Solomon, God’s ordinance took a back seat to politics. And we see the same thing happening today, with politics playing a major role in the Supreme Court decision. Ironically, it was Solomon who said, “there is nothing new under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9).

Having multiple wives and concubines didn’t end with Jacob and Solomon. The Bible tells of dozens of men who chose to ignore God’s ordinance when it came to monogamy. But not so with sexual orientation. Interestingly, there is no biblical account of a same sex marriage. There isn’t even a hint of anyone *suggesting* two people of the same gender ought to marry. Why might this be so? Perhaps the people understood such a union would violate not one, but several of God’s ordinances—including the call to be fruitful and multiply.

So what about the rainbow? Do its vibrant colors now belong to the LGBT constituency? Absolutely not! Take time to read Genesis chapter 9. Here is where God made a covenant promise to Noah and all future generations. Here is where God gave a beautiful sign to remind us of His faithfulness—the sign of the rainbow. Let's never forget that God is in control. He is all-powerful with total dominion and absolute authority. He decreed what the rainbow would symbolize. It represents His sovereignty.

The sad truth is we are all prone to break God's ordinances. As I said, this tendency is part of our "flesh" nature. But thankfully, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we don't have to live according to the flesh. In Christ, we are no longer governed by the flesh nature. Instead, we yield to the Spirit. And the Holy Spirit equips us to follow God's ordinances. He even gives us joy through our obedience. So next time you see a rainbow, you ought to rejoice! Then say "yes" to God's will, and "yes" to His way.

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