

The Shattering of Jars of Clay

Beginning on Tuesday, April 21st, Dan Haseltine, front-man for the popular Christian band Jars of Clay, took to Twitter to announce his apparent support for same-sex “marriage.” And for the life of him, he can’t figure out a single good reason to oppose it.

It is for reasons like this that we have been sounding the alarm these last 10 years.

In a series of tweets posted over a three-day period, and prompted by a movie he watched while in flight, he wrote: “The treatment of people as less than human based on the color of skin is crazy... Or gender, or sexual orientation for that matter.”

Of course, to compare skin color with “sexual orientation” is to compare apples with oranges, as has been demonstrated many times before.

But that was only the beginning. He added, “Not meaning to stir things up BUT... Is there a non-speculative or non ‘slippery slope’ reason why gays shouldn’t marry? I don’t hear one.”

This really boggles the mind.

When you’re sliding down a dangerous slippery slope, you don’t say, “Give me one good reason we’re in danger, other than the fact that we’re careening down this deadly slope.”

No. You grab hold of something to stop your fall and then figure out how to climb back to solid ground.

Does this gifted artist not realize that the only reason we’re

talking about redefining marriage today is because we are well down that slope already?

This is the day of full-blown incestuous relationships on popular TV shows like Game of Thrones; of other shows glorifying polyamory (married and dating!), polygamy (from Big Love to Sister Wives to My Five Wives), and teen pregnancy; of news reports about the “wedding” of three lesbians. It is the day of almost half of all first-time American mothers having their babies out of wedlock, with cohabitation rates up more than 700% since 1960, and it is against this backdrop that talk of same-sex “marriage” has become prominent.

Do we really want to accelerate the destruction of marriage?

Dan also tweeted, “I’m trying to make sense of the conservative argument. But it doesn’t hold up to basic scrutiny. Feels akin to women’s suffrage. Is the argument born of isolated application of scripture or is it combined with the knowledge born of friendship with someone who is gay? I just don’t see a negative effect to allowing gay marriage. No societal breakdown, no war on traditional marriage. ?? Anyone?”

Assuming Dan’s sincerity, let me reply to his questions.

First, for years now, Christian leaders have been articulating many good reasons why it is not good for society to redefine marriage, quite apart from the (very valid) slippery slope argument, and some of them have not even used the Bible to prove their points. Important books on the subject include those of Frank Turek, Matthew D. Staver, Erwin Lutzer, and, most recently, Robert P. George, Sherif Girgis, and Ryan T. Andersen, among others.

My YouTube debate on the subject is readily available, and there are fine books outlining the biblical definition of marriage and sexuality, including studies by Andreas Kostenberger and Richard M. Davison.

Second, while there is strong biblical support for gender distinction, there is no support for the oppression of women, which is why the spread of Christianity around the world has had a liberating effect on women over the centuries. In stark contrast, the Bible condemns all forms of homoeroticism (as is recognized by many gay scholars as well), while every single example of God-blessed marriage or romance takes place between a man and a woman.

I have an online lecture that addresses this issue, and I tackle the subject at length in my new book as well. There is simply no comparison between women's rights and sanctioning homosexual practice.

Third, the argument against same-sex "marriage" is based on the consistent testimony of Scripture, affirmed by Moses, Jesus, and Paul, and it is never contradicted a single time from Genesis to Revelation. Again, I demonstrate this in my new book, and other scholars, most notably Robert A. Gagnon, have argued this persuasively in depth. (Despite many attacks on his work, his arguments stand strong.)

Fourth, many of us have gay friends or relatives, and our positions are motivated by love. But what does having a gay friend or relative have to do with understanding God and his Word? I have dear friends who are very religious Jews, and they are some of the finest people I know, yet I still believe they are lost without Jesus. (And they, of course, see me as gravely deceived.)

Do we rewrite the Bible to accommodate our sentiments towards others, just because they are nice people?

Fifth, as articulated in the books cited in the first point, above, there are many negative consequences to redefining marriage, including: The assault on the freedoms of conscience, speech, and religion of those who do not accept this redefinition; the establishing of households that

guarantee that a child will have either no father or no mother; the transformation of children's education to include the validation of all forms of "marriage"; the continued deconstruction of gender distinctions, leading to all kinds of societal confusion; and much, much more.

It is for good reason that gay activists have long declared that if they can redefine marriage, the rest of their goals will inevitably be realized.

In short, yes, redefining marriage declares a massive war on "traditional marriage" (better framed as "true marriage" or "natural marriage") and yes, it leads to all kinds of societal breakdown.

Put another way (and this is a question for you, Dan), Do you think that God's order for marriage and family, established plainly in the Word and recognized by virtually all societies in history, can be thrown aside without consequences?

Dan, you wrote, "Never liked the phrase: 'Scripture clearly says...(blank) about... Because most people read and interpret scripture wrong.'"

Perhaps this is the root of your problem? Is the Bible not clear about anything? Sin? Salvation? Forgiveness? Jesus being the only Savior and Lord? Adultery being bad? Fidelity being good? Shall I list 100 more items that are abundantly clear in Scripture?

But it appears you're not really certain about many moral issues, based on your tweet that said, "I don't think scripture 'clearly' states much of anything regarding morality," and, "I don't particularly care about Scriptures stance on what is 'wrong.' I care more about how it says we should treat people."

Did you really mean to write this? Is it possible to spend 5 minutes reading God's precious Word without recognizing that

Scripture clearly states a tremendous amount regarding morality and that, without his moral standards, we will never treat others rightly?

You also asked, “Just curious what ‘condoning a persons [sic] homosexuality’ does. Does it change you? Does it hurt someone? What is behind the conviction?”

Do you not realize that couples involved in consensual adult incest (and other relationships) are asking this exact same question? What do you say to them?

Perhaps it is a Jesus-based, Spirit-led, scripturally-grounded morality that is behind our convictions? And if we condone something God opposes – which means that it is not good for the people involved – how are we showing them love? To the contrary, we are actually hurting them.

My brother, as an influential Christian leader, you have a tremendous responsibility before the Lord to those who follow you, especially to impressionable, young believers, and you have not acted wisely by opening up a volatile discussion like this on Twitter.

Were there no godly leaders you could counsel with privately? Was it good stewardship of your popularity and influence to announce your views on Twitter and then expect a substantive dialogue delimited by 140 character tweets? Are subjects like the meaning of marriage and the authority of God’s Word in the life of a Christian now decided by who can come up with the catchier sound bite?

You probably don’t know me from Adam, but I’ll be glad to spend time with you to help you address these issues from the position of grace and truth. My door is open to you, and as one who greatly appreciates the culture-impacting power of music and song, it would be my privilege to meet with you.

That being said, if these tweets expose the soft, scripturally

weak underbelly of the contemporary Christian music scene, then let's put on our seatbelts and expect the worst.

The good news is that this will separate the wheat from the chaff, and in the end, the light will outshine the darkness.

Editor's note: On the afternoon of April 25th, Dan Haseltine posted a statement on his website seeking to further clarify his remarks and offering apologies for some poorly worded statements.

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