

Why Gay NBA Player Jason Collins Gets Upset With Christian Pastors

Sports Illustrated ran a story on April 29, 2013, with a headline that read: “Why NBA center Jason Collins is coming out now.” Collins officially made sports history by becoming the first professional American player to announce his homosexuality to the world. After the Supreme Court ruling on gay marriage, he’s coming out again—this time about his faith and what upsets him about Christian ministry leaders.

Paul Raushenbush, executive editor of Global Spirituality and Religion for the *Huffington Post*, interviewed Collins about his Christian upbringing and faith.

“With regards to my spirituality, I always believed in God. I always focus on the part in the Bible that is about love—loving your neighbor and I think that’s what religion should be about,” Collins said. “It should be something that brings communities together.”

I agree. I like to focus on the love part also. God is love and Christianity should bring communities together. Of course, we can’t pick and choose the parts of the Bible we want to believe. We have to take the whole counsel of God, including teachings about sexual immorality. God loves me, but if I fornicate with my neighbor I’m not loving my neighbor. I’m sinning with my neighbor—and against my own body (see 1 Cor. 6:18). Sin, not truth spoken in love, tears communities apart.

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“It frightens me and makes me upset when people would

use—especially ministers and people who have this great leadership in the world of religion—would try to use religion as a way to single different groups out or different groups of people out and point to them as sort of the bad guy, which tears communities apart,” says Collins.

I agree. I don’t think any one group of people should be singled out for their sin. Well, that’s not entirely true. Murderers, violent criminals and child molesters, when caught, are singled out and put in prison—and rightly so. Generally, though, I don’t think Christians should point a finger at sexual immorality among one group of people when sexual immorality is running rampant in the house of God. That, however, doesn’t mean that Christian pastors can’t address immorality. They should. I wish more would. I discussed what the Bible says about immorality and other sins when I was on “Fox News Radio” with Alan Colmes.

“I always believed in God. I always had a connection with God and I still do, to this very day,” Collins says. “It’s just with the messenger—with the person (who’s) delivering the message—that’s where I get a little cautious ... I have my tentacles up when I hear people start to use words or start to use the Bible or start to use language that can make people feel unwelcome in the church because I think the church should be a welcoming place for everyone.”

I agree. I don’t want anyone to feel uncomfortable in church. Well, that’s not exactly true, either. When the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin, it does tend to make you feel uncomfortable. The church should be a welcoming environment for those seeking God. At the same time, pastors should not be forced to change what they believe—or avoid preaching on sin—to make everyone feel comfortable. We must hold fast to the Word of God even when it’s offensive, without purposely trying to offend. Jesus is the Rock of Offense (see 1 Pet. 2:8).

In 2013, I wrote an article called “Why I’m Praying for the First Openly Gay NBA Player.” I’m still praying for him. I followed up with another article asking the question: “What if NBA’s First Gay Player Jason Collins Renounced Homosexuality?” It could happen. He says he has a connection with God. My prayer is that God will encounter Jason’s heart with the great love that he so loves to focus on in the Bible.

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