

Why Oregon Bakers Should Have Sold Wedding Cake to Gay Couple

There does not seem to be a week that goes by that we do not hear of a gay versus Christian issue arising in our nation. The most recent was with a bakery in Oregon. The bakery angered a same-sex lesbian couple by refusing to bake the wedding cake for their upcoming marriage.

The result was that Sweet Cakes by Melissa closed its storefront business on Saturday.

The shop's closing came on the heels of news that the lesbian couple the store rejected had filed a complaint with the state, alleging that Sweet Cakes by Melissa discriminated against them based on their sexual orientation.

In response to the complaint, the bakery's co-owner Melissa Klein argued that turning away the couple was "definitely not discrimination at all. We don't have anything against lesbians or homosexuals," she said in August. "It has to do with our morals and beliefs. It's so frustrating because we went through all of this in January, when it all came out."

Klein's remarks echoed sentiments her husband, Aaron, shared with NBC earlier this year.

"I think [the state labor commissioner] is going to have to decide what's more important: the Oregon state Constitution, or the statute that was passed in 2007," he said at the time. "They dropped the ball by not putting in any exemption for religious beliefs."

People came online and in-person in front of the store to voice their support or outrage at the situation.

Why Christians Have Difficulty Navigating This Space

From where I sit, it seems pretty clear to me that the couple should have provided service to the gay couple. They are not operating a church that has specific guidelines about the gay lifestyle that would violate Scripture and their conscience. Yes, they are Christians trying to honor God in their business. But there is a distinction here.

If you are operating a public business, discriminating against a group of people by refusing to sell a product to them for whatever reason seems to simply feed the gay movement with more ammunition to accuse Christians of bigotry. Chick-fil-A would never think of not selling their chicken to a gay person. That does not mean they cannot hold a personal or corporate view about a social issue. That is freedom of speech.

If this gay couple walked into Jesus' carpentry shop to buy a table, I cannot imagine He would not sell them a table. I believe He would view that couple with compassion, realizing that something is amiss in their need for love and intimacy that led them to make such a choice. He would build a bridge into their lives, much like He did with the Samaritan woman, in order to demonstrate God's love to them in hopes they might open their hearts to another way. However, He would leave that choice to them as He does with all of us.

Condoning a Lifestyle or Loving a Person Unconditionally?

Many Christians have a difficult time loving those in the gay community because they think that if they do, they are condoning the homosexual lifestyle. Jesus said He came to save those who needed healing, deliverance and salvation, not those who were healthy (Mark 2:17). Jesus spoke to the adulteress woman in the public arena. He told the accusers, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first" (John 8:7). They all walked away. Jesus told the woman, "Go

and sin no more" (v. 11). He did not shame her for her past behavior; she already knew the condition of her life and the shame she brought upon herself.

The next time you are confronted with doing business with a gay person or anyone who represents a lifestyle that you find ungodly, consider how Jesus might relate to the person, and become Jesus to them.

After all, you are here to be heaven's representative on earth. What kind of reflection of heaven are you?

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