

Homosexuality – Various Scriptures

We're back to our Untouchable series this weekend – talking about Homosexuality (H)

H is touchy b/c it affects so many

I'm pretty sure that every single one of you knows at least one person who is openly gay

Many of you have brothers and sisters, or sons and daughters who are gay

Maybe even Moms or Dads

And it's likely that some of you sitting here today struggle with it, personally

If so, I'm glad you're here

It's touchy b/c it affects so many, and evokes such strong feelings in most people

For those of you not personally affected, it's feelings of revulsion/disgust

For those with gay relatives, maybe it's feelings of guilt or futility

And for those involved, it's usually feelings of loneliness, abandonment, condemnation, and persecution

So no matter how you slice it, it's a touchy issue

And I want you to know, especially if you're visiting for the first time, that I'm not going to speak any differently about this topic, than I have about any other

I'm not going to speak any less truthfully b/c it's a sensitive issue

Nor am I going to speak any less lovingly b/c of the subject matter

I intend to speak the truth, as lovingly as I can

And I hope you'll listen to it, as lovingly as you can

So why don't you get your Bible in hand, and open up to Gen 1

A proper understanding of H starts with the Bible, and . . .

The Bible says it's wrong

When it comes to H, the Bible says it's wrong

First of all, b/c it's contrary to God's design for oneness

Gen 1:27 – God created two sexes, male and female; and we find out why in . . .

2:18 – Notice that God creates a *woman* for Adam; Not another *man*

A woman *fit for him* (18) – which in the Hebrew literally means “according to the opposite of him”

Or, a woman “like-opposite” him

Like him in ways none of the animals were

Like him in terms of her ability to think, and the capacity for emotions – having been made in the image of God just like Adam

But she was *opposite* him in terms of their physical fit and emotional chemistry

God made a woman for man, who was perfectly fit for him in every way – b/c she was both like *and* opposite him; something a man could never be

And in v24, he intends for them to be knit together as one flesh (read v24)

God's design is for our sexuality to be lived out in the context of a monogamous marriage relationship between one man and one woman

That's the precedent/pattern, established at the beginning of time, for all mankind

All of which is affirmed by Jesus himself, in **Mt 19:4-5**

Jesus looked upon sexuality *exactly* the same way as Gen ch1&2

And there's no mention of anything else as a legitimate, God-sanctioned expression of our sexuality, anywhere else in the Bible

Including H; In fact, the Bible condemns it

- Like in Gen 19 where the men of Sodom were enflamed with H lust and indulgence Which in that text calls it *wicked*, the cause of *great outcry to the Lord*, and the reason for the destruction of the 2 cities

That too is confirmed in **Jude v7** where he says that God brings punishment on unbelievers, angels and men alike . . .

Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Notice here that H behavior is characterized as *immoral*, and the desire as *unnatural*

And to indulge in it, or even pursue it – is deserving of eternal punishment

It's not wrong to be *tempted* with a same-sex attraction . . .

But it is wrong to pursue it and indulge in it, just like heterosexual lust

- And then there's Lev 18:22 – *You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination* [something extremely displeasing to God].

And Lev 20:13 – *If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.*

Now, thankfully we're no longer bound by the consequences of the Law

Rom 7 and Gal 3 make that clear; But we are held to the principles of the Law

That, according to 1 Cor 9, which says that *it was written for us*, and includes an example of how it applies in principle

So though we're no longer bound by the consequences of this law in Lev 20, the principle, that God frowns mightily on H acts, still applies

He is jealous for his design – for his glory and our good

- That principle of God's contempt for H, is reiterated by Paul in **1 Tim 1:8-10** There's no doubt here, that by lumping *men who practice homosexuality* together with those who are lawless, disobedient, ungodly, sinners, unholy, and profane . . . He clearly is saying it's wrong

Which is similar to **1 Cor 6:9-10** where he says . . .

Unrighteous – those in a present state of rebellious, ongoing sin

Those who continue to willfully and rebelliously indulge in such things, H included, are not a part of God's people and will not go to heaven

- Then finally, Rom 1:26-27

For this reason – the reason being in v25 that they exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and failed to worship him . . .

Notice here that H relations are characterized as – dishonorable, unnatural, contrary to nature (i.e. God's design for sexuality), calloused, and worthy of punishment

The Bible is clear – H is a grievous sin against God, and a rejection of his design for creation

And accepting that is the first step toward right thinking and right living . . .

Whether you're personally involved, related to someone who is, or a carefree bystander

The Bible says it's wrong, and . . .

The world has it wrong

One of my biggest concerns these days, is not that H has become culturally acceptable, or even sanctioned and encouraged in some circles – that's bad

But I *expect* that for people who don't know the Lord and don't acknowledge the Bible as his Word

My concern is that professing *Christians* are condoning the behavior and accepting it as a legitimate lifestyle – that troubles me

It tells me that one of 3 things is true – we're succumbing to the falsehoods, caving to the cultural pressure, or ignoring our Bibles

Not good, on any of those fronts

So, having addressed biblical record, I want to address 3 commonly held myths about H

3 falsehoods that are being aggressively perpetuated, and blindly accepted

And my hope is to inform you and equip you to stand strong amidst the pressure

Myth #1 – Homosexuals are born that way

Implying that b/c they don't *choose* their sexual orientation, they can't *change* it

And therefore their behavior in expressing it, can't be wrong

There's only one problem . . .

No study has ever been done that conclusively links H with genetics, or areas of the brain, or anything else physiological

People have tried, and *are* trying, but the results are inclusive at best and biased at worst

Unfortunately, those with a pro-homosexual agenda in our society, have been quick to perpetuate the myth, without first reading the fine print or checking the facts

- There *are* studies that show H *tendencies* due to nurture, environment, and personality
Just like studies that show tendencies toward alcoholism, anger, violence in some p'ple
But nothing indicates that the tendency is *deterministic* – that b/c you're predisposed toward H feelings, you are H, and can never change

Myth #2 – The Bible prohibits only *illegitimate* homosexuality

If you haven't heard this yet, you will

B/c among those who are working tirelessly for the normalization of H in our culture . . .

Are people who fully realize that the Bible's opposition to it must be neutralized or rationalized, if they are to be fully successful

And one of the ways they do that, is by saying that the Bible only prohibits *illegitimate* H

Only things like H prostitution, or *unfaithful* H relationships, or pederasty

But not monogamous, one-partner H relationships

- The problem w/ that line of reasoning, is that there's absolutely no biblical support for it

There's no grammatical support in the words of the Bible

There's no contextual support in the passages of the Bible

There's no theological support anywhere in the Bible

There's not a single shred of evidence from the Bible or extra-biblical literature of that time, to even indicate such a conclusion, let alone prove it

In fact, it's just the opposite – not once is H referred to positively in the Bible

Everything points to the overwhelming conclusion that the verses we just looked at, refer to *all* kinds of H conduct, regardless of who's involved, or for how long

It's special pleading to say otherwise, and an inconsistent method of interpretation

Myth #3 – Monogamous homosexual relationships don't hurt anybody

First of all, studies and surveys, especially among *male* H's . . .

Show that faithful, one-partner relationships are so rare, as to be almost a contradiction of terms

The widespread pattern for most H's, is multiple sex partners, often numbering in 100's

But even if every H relationship was monogamous, there's still the problem of punishment for sin

Paul said they would *receive in themselves the due penalty for their error* (Rom 1:27)

What that is, we don't know – it could be physical, emotional, spiritual

It could be now or later; I don't know

What I do know, is that God doesn't waste words

And if he says there's a penalty, there's a penalty

And the ripple effect will not stop at their front door, b/c we live in an intertwined culture

If your plight is bad enough, it eventually affects everyone around you

You need look no further than . . .

Increased health insurance costs – b/c some people don't take care of their bodies

Or our current economic woes – b/c some people over-extend themselves

Or our over-stuffed criminal justice system – b/c some people do bad things

If one person lives poorly, we're all at risk

So even if all H relationships *were* monogamous, they would still face the suffering of God's punishment, and society would face the prospect of spill-over

* No matter how many people perpetuate the myths, or believe the lies (and more and more will) – the world has it wrong

But God's standard remains, and we must remain with it

To do otherwise is to risk our own peril – both personally *and* culturally

Up to this point, it's been pretty bad news, especially if you struggle with H

But I want you to know . . .

There's hope for those involved

One of the most insidious lies of the world is that "once a H, always a H"

Not only does the testimony of thousands of people refute that – men and women who have returned to a healthy heterosexual lifestyle . . .

But more importantly, it runs contrary to God's Word

1 Cor 6:9-11

When adulterers met and trusted Jesus in the Cor. church – they became former adulterers

When swindlers met and trusted Jesus – they became former swindlers

And when H's met and trusted Jesus – they became *former* H's

Washed of their sins, set apart for God's use, and righteous in his eyes

All of which means, there's *hope* for those involved

You *can* change; You *can* break out of the frustration, despair, anxiety, guilt

You *can* be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb

You *can* be restored to a new life of wholeness and purity before God

And yes, you *can* be forgiven

But it takes a personal encounter with Jesus Christ for it to happen

An encounter of faith – that he can and will give you full and eternal life

An encounter of repentance – where you confess your sin and commit to turn from it

- I'm not suggesting that praying a prayer to make Jesus Lord of your life, will suddenly take away your deep desires for H
Nor will a prayer erase *years* of sinful tendencies
It's usually not that simple – H desires are rarely so easily conquered

More likely, your decision to leave a life of H for a life in Christ, will be the hardest thing you've ever done

But if you're gut-level honest with God about your sin . . .

If you're *uncompromising* in your loyalty and allegiance to Jesus Christ . . .

If you're *unwavering* in your commitment to counseling and personal accountability . . .

And you're *unswerving* in your involvement in the body of Christ, the church . . .

Then there's hope – and a lot of it

You may not have chosen your same-sex feelings . . .

But you can choose what you do with them

And if you choose to confess them in faith, then God will redeem you in love

The alternative is to sink deeper and deeper into a hopeless life of hollowness

There's hope for those involved . . .

And help from those who aren't

I'm referring to us – *our* church

And I want you to know, that if you consider yourself gay – you're welcome here

You're made in God's image just like we are . . .

And the grace that was sufficient to save us, is just as sufficient to save you

You're welcome here, and we want to help you if you want to receive it

- **You can expect . . . 5 things from our help:**

1. Truth – we will tell you the truth

We will tell you what the Bible says, and how it applies to your life

B/c it's the truth that will set you free, and nothing else

Not half-truths, not watered down truths – just the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth

2. Respect – we will not demean you, diminish you, disparage you

Nor will we refer to you in derogatory terms – ever

Whether you accept our help, or not – we will respect you

3. Grace – we have issues just like you

They may not be your issues, but they're issues just the same

And we will seek to understand your struggle as best we can, and show the same grace to you as God shows to us

That's not to say that we will *ever* condone or excuse your sin – we will not

We'd be just as wrong as you

But we *will* show you as much grace, compassion, mercy, and patience as we possibly can, short of enabling you in your sin

4. Accountability

The Christian life is weak at best and false at worst, without accountability

Every single one of us needs the mutual accountability of another brother/sister in

Christ – so as to refrain from sin and live to righteousness

If you seek our help, you can expect accountability

5. Love

Realizing that H is more about loneliness, rejection, confusion, and a search for belonging – than anything else . . .

We will, in the strength that God provides, seek to love you and even put your needs ahead of our own

That's the help you can expect, should you ask for it here at Harvest

And we are compelled by the love of God to offer it, b/c . . .

*H is wrong; And the world has it wrong

But there's hope in Christ for those involved

And help in his church, from those who aren't

Links and articles for further information

www.citizenlink.org/FOSI/

www.exodus.to

www.pureintimacy.org

www.probe.org