



HEY, GOD, WHAT ABOUT...

Homosexuality & Gay Marriage?*

Summer Sanctuary Bible Studies
Woodbury Lutheran Church
Session 4 – June 27, 2004

1. PRELIMINARIES

- We are all human beings.
- We are all sexual beings.
- We are all sinners.
- Most, if not all of us here, are Christians

2. SOME DISTINCTIONS

- Between sins and crimes
- Between homosexual orientation, for which people are not responsible, and homosexual practices, for which they are.
- Between casual self-gratifying homosexual practices and homosexual practices characterized by commitment and love

3. MOST RELEVANT SCRIPTURE ON HOMOSEXUALITY

- Stories of Sodom and Gibeah (Genesis 19:1-13; Judges 19:16-30)
 - i. Hebrew "yadah" (Genesis 19:5; Judges 19:22)
 - ii. Jude 7, "*In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.*"
 - iii. Philo and Josephus
- Leviticus passages
 - i. Leviticus 18:22, "*Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.*"
 - ii. Leviticus 20:13, "*If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.*"
- Paul in Romans 1
 - ²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.*
 - ²⁶Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women*



* This Bible study includes at several points the excellent work of John Stott in an article for *Christianity Today*, (November 23, 1985, pp. 21-28) titled, "Homosexual Marriage."

exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

²⁸ Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

- Other Passages in Paul

- i. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, ⁹Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

- ii. 1 Timothy 1:9-10, ⁹We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers,¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers-- and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

1. Malakoi (1 Cor 6:9, "prostitutes") = lit., "soft to the touch"
2. Arsenokoitai (1 Cor. 6:9, "homosexual offenders" and 1 Tim 1:10, "perverts") = lit., "male in bed"

- These negative prohibitions clearly mark homosexual behavior as sinful. Just as important and convincing, though, is the positive teaching on sexuality and marriage in the creation history of Genesis 2.

4. SEX AND MARRIAGE IN THE CREATION HISTORY

Genesis 2:18-24

¹⁸ The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

¹⁹ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found.²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh.²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said,
"This is now bone of my bones

*and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman, '
for she was taken out of man."*

²⁴ *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*

- The creation history in Genesis 2 affirms these fundamental truths:
 - i. The human need for companionship (Vs. 18)
 - ii. God's provision to meet that need in a complementary human being, woman (vs. 20)
 - iii. God's institution of marriage as a reunion of two who were originally one, then separated, now reunited (The complementary nature of male and female sexual organs is a physical symbol of the deeper spiritual complementary nature of God's desired oneness.)

iv. In vss. 23-24:



1. "a man" highlights marriage as between single individuals
2. "shall leave his father and mother" signals a public event
3. "and cleave to his wife" denotes marriage as permanent and heterosexual
4. "and they will become one flesh" points to sexual intercourse as a sign and seal of the marriage covenant

v. Jesus in Mark 10:4-9 makes it clear that a lifelong union between a husband and wife was God's intention from the beginning..

- **Summary**

Scripture defines the marriage God instituted in terms of heterosexual monogamy. It is the union of one man and one woman, which must be publicly acknowledged (leaving of parents), permanently sealed (cleaving), and physically consummated (one flesh). Scripture presents no other God-ordained kind of marriage or sexual intercourse; God has provided no alternatives.

5. CONTEMPORARY OBJECTIONS BY SUPPORTERS OF HOMOSEXUALITY AND GAY MARRIAGE

- The often cited Scripture passages are culture-bound.
- I'm gay because God made me this way; so gay must be good..
- A homosexual partnership characterized by love is good since love is the highest good.
- Heterosexual Christians need to accept homosexual Christians without judgment (Romans 14:1ff.) as God accepts us just as we are.

6. CRUCIAL GUIDELINES FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH THIS ISSUE

- In the light of the Bible's revelation, homosexual practice or behavior is a sin.

- Homosexual "marriage" abrogates an order of God's creation.
- True Christian faith accepts God's standards, no matter how difficult they are to meet.
- Love needs law to guide it.
- Homosexually oriented individuals must be called to abstinence from homosexual practices.

i. Sexual experience is not essential to human fulfillment.

ii. Abstinence where any sinful behavior is concerned is both good and possible (2 Cor 12:9).

⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

iii. Change from homosexual behavior is possible (1 Cor 6:9-11).

⁹Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

- The church is called to love homosexual people without accepting their behavior. Homophobic slams and even hatred overlook the fact that the great majority of homosexual people are not responsible for their condition (but they are, of course, for their conduct). True Christian love is not incompatible with the maintenance of Christian moral standards.

C.S. Lewis said he once thought the old adage to "love the sinner but hate the sin" was rubbish until he realized he did this in reference to himself all the time.

God's church is a hospital for all who struggle with an orientation or compulsion toward any sinful behavior.

- In the practice of church discipline the church must not discriminate between homosexual and heterosexual offenses. Any abrogation of God's design for human sexuality and marriage is sinful.