

THE LOVE OF GOD AND SAME-SEX RELATIONS

The Biblical Evidence

1. Creation

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; **male and female** he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful** and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Genesis 2:20 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.** 25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Sexuality is designed by a loving God at creation for a male-female complementary procreative marriage union.

2. The Early Times

Genesis 9:20-28 The possible homosexual rape of Noah.

Genesis 19:5 They [the men of Sodom & Gomorrah] called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."

Genesis 18:22-19:29 Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed, at least in part, for homosexual offences. See also Ezekiel 16:49-50; Isaiah 1:7-17; Matthew 10:14-15; Luke 10:10-12; 2 Peter 2:6-10.

3. The Law of Moses

Leviticus 18:7 "Do not dishonour your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her. 8 "**Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonour your father.** 9 "Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere.

Leviticus 18:22 "**Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.**

Leviticus 20:11 "**If a man sleeps with his father's wife**, he has dishonoured his father. Both the man and the woman must be put to **death**; their blood will be on their own heads.

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.

God warns that both same-family intercourse (incest) and same-sex intercourse are to be condemned by death because both are violations the complementary male-female creation order. Same-sex acts are called an "abomination" by God because they violate His Love.

4. The History of Israel

Judges 19:22 While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him."

In Judges there is an attempted homosexual rape.

Deuteronomy 23:17 "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the **sons of Israel be a cult prostitute.** 18 "You shall not bring the hire of a harlot or the wages of a "**dog**" into the house of the LORD your God for any votive offering, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God.

In Deuteronomy God warns that the people of God should not be homosexual cult prostitutes (cf. 1 Kings 14:24; 15:22; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7; Job 36:14) are called “dogs.”

5. The Witness of Jesus

Mark 10:1 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them. 2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" 3 "What did Moses command you?" he replied. 4 They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." 5 "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. 6 **"But at the beginning of creation God`made them male and female'.** 7 **`For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8 and the two will become one flesh.'** So they are no longer two, but one. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

Jesus upholds the male-female complementary creation order in Genesis and lays down stricter commands about sexual morality for his disciples than other Jews of his day (cf. Matthew 5:27-32; 19:1-12; Mark 7:21-23; Luke 16:18).

Mark 7:20 He went on: "What **comes out of a man** is what makes him`unclean'. 21 For from within, **out of men's hearts**, come evil thoughts, **sexual immorality**, theft, murder, adultery, 22 greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and make a man`unclean'."

Jesus asserts that it is from the inner orientation of the human will that sin comes. Given Jesus' very conservative views on sexual morality Jesus' condemnation of "sexual immorality" (a broad term encompassing all sex outside male-female marriage) implicitly condemns same-sex relations as originating from the orientation of the heart.

Matthew 7:6 "Do not give 'dogs' what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to 'pigs.' If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

Jesus may allude to Deut 23:17-18 (see above) and may call homosexual cult prostitutes "dogs" and commands that "dogs" and "pigs" (Gentile idolaters) be excluded from the benefits of temple worship.

6. The Witness of Paul

Romans 1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is for ever praised. Amen. 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. **Even their women 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.**

Like idolatry (the sin of sins) and other sins acts of same-sex intercourse (both lesbian and male homosexual) are examples of the suppression of God's truth in the creation order.

1 Corinthians 5:1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: **A man has his father's wife.** 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? 3 Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And **I have already passed judgment** on the one who did this, just as if I were present. 4 When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present,

Paul says that same-family intercourse (incest) is wrong and alludes to Lev 18:8. He maintains in the rest of 1 Cor 5 that the church must exercise church discipline (cf. Jesus' commands about church discipline in Matthew 18:15-19) for the

love of the sinner (so that he will repented and be saved) and in order to guard the holiness of the church.

1 Corinthians 6:9 Do 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 [better **“those take the passive position in same-sex intercourse and those take the active position in same-sex intercourse”**] 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And 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.

Here Paul alludes to many OT Commandments and Lev 18:22 and says that the sins he commands Christians to avoid are a central. Many sins (which include an unrepentant persistent lifestyle of all types of acts of same-sex intercourse) will lead to exclusion from salvation. Note here that Paul agrees with what Jesus says in Mark 9:43-47:

“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

Here the “foot” may be an euphemism for the male sexual organ, Jesus may be saying that celibacy is better than being condemned to hell for unrepentant sexual sin throughout a life-time. However in 1 Cor 6:11 Christ’s love and grace can saves us from all sins.

1 Timothy 1:8 We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. 9 We 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 [better **“those men who indulge in same-sex intercourse”**], for slave traders and liars and perjurers--and for whatever else is contrary to the sound

doctrine 11 that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

Paul once more alludes many passages in the OT (including the 10 Commandments).

7. The Witness of 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.

Jude (Jesus' brother in terms of his earthly family) warns against Sodom & Gomorrah.

8. The End

Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death."

Revelation 22:15 Outside are the dogs, those who practise magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practises falsehood.

John warns that unrepentant sinners (including "dogs"- see above) will be consigned by God to hell.

CONCLUSION

The Biblical evidence is very clear:

1. God's wonderful loving standard of sex only within male-female marriage is widespread and is found in both Testaments (including Jesus). The command against same-sex intercourse is absolute (there are no exceptions at all). This is a distinctive Biblical core value taken in opposition to the cultures of ancient times and, indeed, the West today. It has been the teaching of the early Judaism, the Western & Eastern Orthodox churches, the Roman Catholic & Protestant churches for 2000 years.
2. The command against same-sex intercourse is strong (it a matter of significance since it touches upon the Bible's teaching of creation, the nature of humanity, the authority of Scripture, sin, the love of God, the work of Christ, the Christian life, church unity, and salvation). The ultimate point is this: persistent unrepentant same-sex relations as a lifestyle will result in the exclusion of those who habitually perform these acts from salvation (i.e. hell). Those who advocate same-sex relations as acceptable are really being unloving towards homosexual people since these advocates leave homosexual people in danger of hell. If we saw someone walking towards the edge of a cliff we would shout to them to turn around and not to continue and fall off the cliff. Those who maintain that same-sex relations are wrong are those who truly love homosexual people.
3. Therefore the debate on same-sex relations is not something we can agree to disagree on as a minor or secondary issue since the subject touches on what we believe the gospel is. Some moral issues call for a clear-cut verdict. Christian morality is not based on our feelings (they may deceive us) but on the Word of God, that is, the Bible.

4. Many advocates of same-sex relationships say that the Biblical writers did not know about homosexual orientation and since homosexuals are “hard-wired” or “created” with a same-sex orientation it is unjust not to allow homosexual people to express their inclination. However, the Biblical writers (e.g. Jesus’ words in Mark 7:20-22) see sin as starting as an inner inclination in the will and the heart. Human beings are born sinners (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:19). For the Biblical writers, sin is a bondage or addiction (like drugs or alcohol) as Jesus says in John 8:34. Therefore, the Biblical writers are aware of orientation and yet they maintain that a same-sex lifestyle is unjust. Yes the Biblical writers say same-sex relations are matters of justice – God’s justice against all sin including same-sex relations. Yet there is good news God’s love and grace means that because of Jesus’ death on the cross all sinners (including homosexual sinners) who trust Christ can be justified by faith alone.

5. True spiritual unity is based on love, and part of our love for God is defined by God in the Bible as obeying His commands. Nor are we dividing the people of God, rather it those who reject the Bible and church’s teaching who are dividing the people of God. We have not chosen to talk about this subject, those who want change the church’s historic teaching are those who insist on talking about it and changing what the Bible says. Wolfhart Pannenberg, the great German theologian, says:

“Here lies the boundary of a Christian church that knows itself to be bound by the authority of Scripture. Those who urge the church to change the norm of its teaching on this matter must know that they are promoting schism. If a church were to let itself be pushed to the point where it ceased to treat homosexual activity as a departure from the biblical norm, and recognized homosexual unions as a personal partnership of love equivalent to marriage, such a church would stand no longer on biblical ground but against the unequivocal witness of Scripture. A church that took this step would cease to be the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.”

6. We believe that all sex outside monogamous faithful heterosexual marriage is wrong. We are not singling out same-sex relations as a unique sin, we are responding to the agenda of those who want same-sex unions to be blessed and insist that clergy can legitimately be in same-sex unions. We remain Anglican since the Lambeth Resolution 1.10 (1998) condemns the blessing of same-sex unions.

7. What is ultimately at stake is the love of God. God's commands are for our good, if we love God we will obey his commands. We are not being "homophobic." We condemn all forms of hatred against homosexual people. We must love the sinner but hate the sin. We believe that same-sex acts as part of an unrepentant lifestyle are wrong, but that same-sex temptation is not sinful in itself. Tolerance is not the same as love. To tolerate bad things (like injustice, greed etc.) is unloving. If we really love those who suffer from same-sex behaviour we will compassionately tell them about the spiritual dangers of their life-style. If these are issues in your own life, please do come and see the clergy, I (Ro) have counselled those suffering from this condition in the past. We will be compassionate and loving, for with Christ you can change since "God is Love."

If you agree please think and pray about supporting the Jerusalem Declaration as an individual on: www.anglican-mainstream.net

See also the following excellent website: www.robagnon.net

QUESTIONS FOR HOME GROUPS

1. What do you feel about the subject of same-sex relationships?
2. What theological issues are at stake in the debate as to whether same-sex relations are right or wrong?
3. Read Mark 10:1-12. What is the question that Jesus is asked in v 2?
4. How does Jesus reply in vs. 9-12?
5. What is the foundation of Jesus' view about marriage in vs 6-8?
6. What implications does Jesus' view have on the debate about same-sex relations?
7. Read Mark 7:20-22. Where does Jesus say that all sin begins? What sins does Jesus condemn? What does Jesus' condemnation of "sexual immorality" cover given Mark 10:1-12? What implications do Jesus' words have for same-sex relations?

8. Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-6 & 6:9-11. What bearing does Paul's command that the church exercise discipline in the case of same-family relations (incest) have for the debate on same-sex relations?
9. In 1 Corinthians 6:9 what is the consequence for those have same-sex relations for their salvation?
10. Given 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 what does Real & Biblical love for those involved in same-sex unions look like?
11. Read Romans 1:18-27. What does Paul say about same-sex relations?
12. Why does Paul condemn same-sex relations in vs 26-27?
13. In the light of the Bible where should Christ Church stand on the subject of same-sex relations? How can we truly love homosexual people?
14. Do pray for those involved in same-sex relations.