

Old New Questions (5): Why Are Christians So Homophobic

(Romans 1:18-31)

I. Introduction

- A. Which best selling-author was recently described by “*hate-mongering idiot*?”
1. And which political leader was called a “*rational-sounding sort of bigot*?”
 - a. “*Hate-mongering idiot*” is Rick Warren; “*rational bigot*” is Pres. Obama
 - b. Both statements came after Warren was to say invocation at inauguration
 - c. Warren is a hate-mongering idiot for preaching that homosexuality is sin
 2. Ironically, Warren seen as too soft on homosexuality by fundamentalists
 - a. His church spends millions on AIDS in Africa (*90% of Warren’s income*)
 - b. They often work closely with groups sponsored by homosexuals
 - c. He preaches repentance, but church turns no one away from worship
 3. He has found that being middle of the road is a sure way of being run over!
- B. The charge that is often made is that most Christians are “*homophobic*.”
1. “*Homophobic*” is literally is “*fear*,” but in common use it means “*hated*”
 - a. Any hatred for or discrimination against homosexuals is homophobia
 - b. Baptist church in Topeka basic message is that god-hates-fags (website)
 2. People hear that kind of extreme, they can think that it’s true of all churches
 - a. **Barna**: 91% of non-Christians (*16-29*) see churches as being “*anti-gay*”
 - b. When they asked, “Who is a Christian?” Their #1 answer is “*anti-gay*”
 - c. **Barna**: How we are perceived on this is a “*Geiger counter*” for ministry
 - 1) Point isn’t that our perception hurts outreach to homosexual people.
 - 2) If we are seen as “*against gays*,” also seen as unloving/unwelcoming
 3. Series on “*Old/New Questions*” that everyone once knew the answer
 - a. But the world has changed, and so these old questions are new again
 - b. We looked at “*Why believe the Bible*” and “*Must I be part of a church?*”
 - c. Last week we looked at, “*Why is sex outside marriage such a big deal?*”
 - 1) People said that lesson took a lot of courage and tact. Not really.
 - 2) Today’s is the lesson that may offend everyone... ask Rick Warren!
 - d. Today’s question is, “*Why are Christians always so homophobic?*”

II. What the Bible Says About Homosexuality

- A. We saw the foundational text on sexuality and marriage last week ([Gen 2:24](#))
- Both Jesus (in [Matt 19:5](#)) and Paul (in [1 Cor 6:16](#)) refer to this text
 - Jesus is talking about sanctity of marriage; Paul is discussing immorality
 - It was God who made male and female to come together in marriage
 - At the risk of sounding trite, God made Adam & Eve, not Adam & Steve!
 - OK, so that sounds trite, but point is that human sexuality is God's idea
 - God created **one man** (male) and **one woman** (female) to be one flesh
 - It's not just God made our parts to fit; He made us to become one flesh
- B. The story of Lot and Sodom in [Genesis 19](#) is a grotesque example of perversion
- Men (angels) come to Lot, and men of Sodom hear he has company ([19:5](#))
 - Literally "*know them*," but we know all what "*know*" means ([Gen 4:1](#))
 - Some suggest they just wanted to be hospitable and chat awhile
 - No, Lot's hospitality is what's threatened—he offers his daughters
 - The men of Sodom are offended Lot would judge their heavier ([19:9](#))
 - It is from Sodom we get "sodomy," the legal term for homosexual practice
 - Some suggest that what is condemned is violence—homosexual rape
 - No, they were guilty of "*sexual immorality and perversion*" ([Jude 7](#))
 - Word "*sexual immorality*" is the generic word for sexual sin,
 - "*Perversion*" is two Greek words that literally mean "*different flesh*."
 - Jude is clear that the sin of Sodom was that of sodomy or homosexuality
- C. The Mosaic Law clearly condemns homosexuality as sinful ([Lev 18:22](#), [20:13](#))
- Both of these condemnation of homosexuality appear in lists of sexual sins
 - It was as if God didn't want to take a chance anyone would miss point
 - Don't have sex with siblings, neighbor's spouse, animals or same gender
 - This is a list of sexual sins; no indication that homosexuality was worse
 - Was it worse because it carried death penalty? Adultery had same penalty
 - Was it worse because it was an "*abomination*" (*kjv*) or "*detestable*" (NIV)?
 - Basically means God doesn't like it (eat unclean animal, [Deut 14:3](#))
 - Homosexuality was a sexual sin in OT (*like any sex outside marriage*)

- D. The most dramatic Biblical discussion of homosexuality is Paul's in **Romans 1**.
1. Paul's basic point is that Roman world had denied God and needed grace
 - a. In Romans 2-3, he makes a similar point as to why Jews need grace
 - b. He says pagan sin began denying God and believing a lie (*Adam and Eve*)
 2. Paul's point about homosexuality is that it's obviously unnatural (**1:26-27**).
 - a. Both men and women exchanged what is natural for what is unnatural
 - b. Paul sees this as perversion; it's not how the Lego's are to fit together
 3. Now, Paul doesn't condemn homosexuality as being worse than other sins
 - a. Rather homosexuality illustrates what happens when we deny God
 - 1) Paul sees it as "*shameless*," the same idea as "*abomination*" in OT
 - 2) It is a perversion of God's way... like divorce, like gossip, like greed
 - b. Homophobic? Points to sin from murder to disobey parents (**1:29-31**)
 4. Homosexuality is an obvious distortion of God's order— just like all sin.
- E. Paul's lists of sins in **1 Cor 6** includes sin of homosexuality... twice (**6:9:10**)
1. First word is "*male prostitute*" (NIV, NRSV) or "*effeminate*" (KJV, NASB)
 - a. The word *μαλακός* originally meant "*soft*" and came to mean effeminate
 - b. It was sometimes used of a "*male prostitute*" who was used by other men
 - c. NET hits that idea with its translation "*passive homosexual partners*"
 2. Second word is "*homosexual offender*" (NIV) or "*homosexuals*" (NASB)
 - a. Greek word *ἀρσενικοίτης* is from two words—"male" & "*coitus*"
 - b. NET uses "*practicing homosexuals*" to stress it is an act, not orientation
 - c. This word is used again by Paul in another list of sins in **1 Tim 1:10**.
 3. The ESV uses phrase "*men who practice homosexuality*" for both words
- F. If you want to know what the Bible says about homosexuality, it is rather plain
1. Some would redefine the words to make Paul condemning pedophiles
 - a. When OT says "*lie with a man as with a women*," that is about technique
 - b. These are quibbles; if you want to know what the Bible says, it's clear
 2. But most don't want to hear what the Bible says; one gay theologian says--
Perhaps Paul is condemning homosexuality in this passage, or at least is labeling it as "unnatural." But the bottom line for you is: So what? Paul was wrong about a number of other things, too. Why should you take him any more seriously than you take Jerry Falwell?

III. Conclusion

- A. This morning we have surveyed what the Bible says about homosexuality
1. And what the Bible says is that homosexual is sinful and wrong
 - a. Because that is what the Bible says, that is what the church must teach
 - b. But then, our question was, “*Why are Christians so homophobic?*”
 2. Can we have a hatred of this sin that is out of proportion with others?
 - a. Consider list of sins in **Romans 1** that includes gay and lesbian sex
 - 1) **Gossip** is condemned more in Proverbs than homosexuality in Bible
 - 2) **Greed** is condemned five times in Bible more than is homosexuality
 - 3) Paul lists “*insolent, arrogant, boastful*” to list. *So how bad is pride?*
 - b. Does God hate homosexuals? We know what God says in **Prov 6:16-19**
 - 1) List starts with pride! Lying is mentioned twice! Ends with disunity!
 - 2) Sure, sexual sin is still sin; the next section is on adultery (**6:20-7:27**)
 - c. Bible never suggests that God sees homosexuality as worse than other sin
- B. Do we see homosexuality as worst sin? Repulsive, repugnant, yucky?
1. Why aren't there www.godhatespride.com or www.godhateslying.com sites
 - a. There is no plank in any political platform opposing pride (*opposite?*)
 - b. Why don't Televangelists blast the sin of greed (*just the opposite?*)
 2. **Question:** What do we do if a practicing prostitute were to visit church?
 - a. Do we point her to Jesus? Do we give her time to learn and grow?
 - 1) Do we teach that her lifestyle is wrong and encourage her to change
 - 2) Do we walk along with her while she struggles to make a decision
 - b. What if this were practicing homosexual? Would response any different?
 - c. Will church going to be a safe place to learn, grow, struggle and decide?
- C. World sees church as homophobic because sometime we may have been
1. If we stridently condemn homosexuality, we only push people away.
 - a. If the power of the cross is to save, we must let it to draw people near.
 - b. If homosexuals are sinners, that makes them who Jesus came to save!
 2. You know that “icky-yuck factor” that makes homosexuality seem worse.
 3. We approach maturity when we feel same about greed, pride & all other sin