

## The Silence Argument: “Didn’t Jesus Approve of Same–Sex Marriage by Saying Nothing?”

Sunday Evening Bible Study, #3  
October 4, 2015

### Review

1. Objection #1: The Emotional Argument: “What if someone I love is gay?”  
Our Response: An “appeal to emotion” fallacy is committed when one is persuaded to accept a faulty conclusion because of sympathy or pity.
2. Objection #2: The Genetic Argument: “What if I was born this way?”  
Our Response: An “appeal to genetics” presumes that genetic predisposition is an excuse for sinful behavior.

### The Silence Argument: “Didn’t Jesus approve of same-sex marriage by saying nothing?”

1. The argument stated:
  - 1.1 “What does Jesus say about homosexuality? Absolutely nothing. Jesus is not recorded as having said anything related to intimate sexual relationships between people of the same gender. One has to wonder, if homosexuality is such a heinous sin against God, why does Jesus himself never refer to it? One cannot extrapolate affirmation of such relationships from that silence, but still, why no mention of an issue now causing entire churches to split? (Gene Robinson)
  - 1.2 “The Bible never directly addresses, and it certainly does not condemn, loving, committed same-sex relationships. There is no biblical teaching about sexual orientation, nor is there any call to lifelong celibacy for gay people.” (Matthew Vines).
  - 1.3 “I would like to read to you what *the* Jesus said about homosexuality...I would like to, but he never said anything about it. Evidently Jesus was so filled with rage that he was speechless...I am confident he condemned it all the time in private, when he was hanging out with those other 12 dudes at their elaborate dinner parties, where they all sat on the same side of the table, just living the bachelor life together, drinking wine and working on their washboard abs,” (Stephen Colbert)
  - 1.4 “Homosexuality was well known in the ancient world, well before Christ was born and Jesus never said a word about homosexuality. In all of his teachings about multiple things — he never said that gay people should be condemned. I personally think it is very fine for gay people to be married in civil ceremonies (Jimmy Carter).

### Our Response to the Silence Argument

1. An “appeal to silence” is a logical fallacy in which someone interprets another person’s silence on an issue as agreement. There are two ways to respond to the assertion that “Jesus said nothing about homosexuality!” The first response is “**So?**” The second response is, “**No!**”
2. **So?** In this response, we concede that Jesus did not specifically mention the word “homosexuality” or specifically make reference to same sex relationships.
  - 2.1 **So?** Jesus didn’t say a lot of things about a lot of things like rape, incest, child molesting, Internet porn, or marrying your horse. What are we to infer from his silence?
  - 2.2 **So?** Some things are so obvious they just don’t have to be said. A Jewish Rabbi teaching Jewish people in Israel in the 1<sup>st</sup> century had no need to clarify the sin of homosexuality.
  - 2.3 **So?** The argument from silence is self-defeating for the pro-gay-marriage view: In the box on the next page is every reference in Scripture that treats same sex relationships favorably:



3. **No!** In this response, we do not concede that Jesus did not address the issue of same sex relationships.
- 3.1. **No!** You can't know that Jesus never said anything about same sex relationships. All you can know is that there is *no written record* of Jesus specifically mentioning this subject. The Bible never claims to record all of what Jesus said (Jn. 21:25).
- 3.2. **No!** In clearly defining marriage in Mt. 19:4–12, Jesus rules out any possibility of same sex marriage. Therefore, the term “same-sex marriage” is an oxymoron like “square circles” or “liquid ice.” It can be “same-sex” or it can be “marriage” but it cannot be both.
1. The definition of marriage does not evolve (compare Mt. 19:4–6 to Gen. 1:27; 2:24).
  2. Marriage is a gift from God, who alone is entitled to define it (*he who created them*).
  3. Marriage is for the procreation, provision, and protection of children (Gen. 1:27,28).
  4. Marriage is a joining together in the most intimate way (*one flesh*).
  5. Marriage is heterosexual (*male and female*).
  6. Marriage is monogamous (*a man...his wife*).
  7. Marriage is permanent (*let not man separate*).
  8. Marriage is dishonorably ruptured by *sexual immorality (porneia)*.
  9. The only alternative to monogamous, heterosexual marriage is celibacy (*eunuchs*).
- 3.3. **No!** Because in using Sodom as a recognized benchmark of sinful depravity among Jews, Jesus is affirming the traditional Jewish understanding that one of Sodom's great sins was homosexual relationships (Jude 7).
- 3.4. **No!** Because in clearly condemning sexual immorality (*porneia*), Jesus prohibits all same-sex intimacy and thus, same-sex marriage. In Jewish thought, *porneia* always referred to any sexual intimacy outside of the bounds of heterosexual marriage (Mt. 5:32; 15:19; 19:9; Mk. 7:21).
1. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*: “illicit sexual intercourse in general”
  2. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Colin Brown): “including not only prostitution and any kind of extra-marital sexual intercourse but also all marriages between relatives forbidden by Rabbinic law. Incest and all kinds of unnatural sexual intercourse...any kind of illegitimate sexual intercourse”
  3. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Kittel): “not only fornication or adultery but incest, sodomy, unlawful marriage...unnatural sex in the pagan world is an outworking of divine judgment (Ro. 1:18ff).”
  4. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Bauer): “prostitution, unchastity, fornication of every kind, of unlawful sexual intercourse...”
5. **No!** Because Jesus is God, all Scripture is inspired by him. Therefore, all Scripture that prohibits same sex relationships are the words of Jesus. (2 Tim. 3:16; Ex. 3:14 with Jn. 8:58; Jn. 16:12–14). In the box below are examples of specific places that same sex relationships are mentioned in the Bible, and in every case, the reference is negative:
- Gen. 19:5; Lev. 18:22–23; Lev. 20:13; Ro. 1:26,27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10; Jude 7
6. **No!** Because in the history of the church, there is no precedent for God's people ever understanding the silence of Jesus to mean he was in favor of same sex marriage. The current innovative interpretations are suspiciously trendy.