

Amazing Grace III: Share It
Loving Sinners Hating Sin
November 10, 2013

PRELUDE – Banner of Love

Worship Songs – O Love That Will Not Let Me Go / You Never Let Go

Feature – Crazy

Drama – Standing Alone

Good morning everyone. Let's pray together.

Father in Heaven, help us this morning to hear and see clearly and to have the heart and mind of Jesus. In His name and for the sake of His Kingdom we pray. Amen.

So, have you ever been in a situation like that? Maybe not over the exact same issue but a situation where there was a profound difference of opinion over what was morally OK and not OK? Where someone felt that by “going along” they would be compromising their convictions of what's right and wrong?

Maybe you were the person in the dad's position – you believed there was a clear moral boundary being violated and you felt you had no choice but to hold the line even though it would not be well-received by others. Maybe you were in the daughter's position and you felt that the boundary in question wasn't that big of a deal and you couldn't understand why anyone would risk straining or even ruining a relationship over it.

If you haven't yet found yourself in that kind of a situation with family, friends or co-workers, it's likely that *you will*. The world we live in today is very complex. There are many competing morals and values and, eventually, they will clash. And when they do, it puts us in a very uncomfortable position, especially if the relationship is important to us.

For example, last summer when we were doing the “God &” series – looking at the issues of God & Guns, God & Grass, God & Gosnell and God & Gays – a lady came up to me after the God & Gays message and said, “My husband and I are really torn. We've been invited to a wedding of a family member who happens to be gay but we believe that God designed marriage to be between a man and a woman. We're not sure what we should do. If we go, are we communicating that we think this is OK? We don't. But if we don't go are we communicating that we don't care for this relative? And that's just not true either.”

Tough questions.

And I've heard many others along the same lines and what they all come down to is this: *how should Christians relate to people who do not believe that Jesus of Nazareth was and is Lord and whose*

conscience is not being shaped by what He taught? How should we relate to people who have not yet become convinced that they are sinners in need of a savior; who have not said “yes” to Jesus and what He did for them on the cross and in His resurrection?

I think from the title of this series and from what Ladell said a few minutes ago, you probably know that the answer has to be ... “with grace. We’re supposed to treat these people with grace!”

That’s because, as we learned last week, we who have received the gift of God’s grace – His no-strings-attached undeserved favor made possible through Jesus – we are to be grace-givers to others.

“Forgive others as Christ forgave you,” Paul wrote. “Pray for those who persecute you,” Jesus said. “Treat them the same way your Heavenly Father has treated you.”

And we talked last week about how this forgiveness works in real life with people who have hurt or offended us and I encourage you, if you were not here, to go online to the media section of our website and listen to, watch or read the message.

But today, we’re going to talk about what it means to be a grace-giver to the people in our lives who we see as “sinners” – people who are not even trying to live up to God’s standards (like the daughter in the drama). How do we go about, as some have described it (for better or worseⁱ), “loving sinners at the same time as hating sin?”

There are lots of ways to try and answer that question but I think the place to start is by looking at the person who did it best – Jesus himself – who was called “the Friend of Sinners.”

Actually, that title was first given to him by his critics, not his followers. Matthew and Luke both tell us that one day Jesus said to these critics:

“John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man [a title Jesus often used to refer to himself] came eating and drinking and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and ‘sinners.’” Luke 7:33-34 (NIV)

It wasn’t meant to be a compliment but the label stuck and eventually did become a badge of honor for Jesus, which is kind of funny if you think about it.

“A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners;” how often have you heard Christians describe their God in *those* terms? Can you imagine walking into church and singing a worship song that went something like “God in Heaven ... Creator of the Universe ... glutton and drunkard ... friend of cheaters and other sinners ... we praise you, we worship you.”

See, it's one thing to say in a generic way that "God loves everyone." But when you put it in *those* terms – that God might actually enjoy schmoozing it up with degenerates – it sounds at least a bit unwise if not altogether foolish. I mean, if God really is a *friend* to those kinds of people, wouldn't it be a threat to the moral order of society?

That was the concern of the critics who the gospels refer to as "the Pharisees and teachers of the law." In reality, they were a lot like you and me. They were well-intentioned people who understood that upholding moral and cultural standards was important if society was to function as it should.

So, as the Gospel of Mark tells us ...

When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked Jesus' disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Mark 2:16 (NIV)

They didn't get it. How could a guy who seemed to be sympathetic to their religious cause – and Jesus *was* in favor of righteousness and purity – how could a guy like that do things that seemed to undermine it?

Friends With a "Sinner"

Actually, when you read the entire second chapter of Mark, you see that this particular question came up at the end of a very long day of interaction between the Pharisees and Jesus. So, I want us to take a look at what actually happened on this day leading up to this question.

It says in verse 1:

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. Mark 2:1 (NIV)

Now, this is interesting for two reasons. One, by this point in time, for whatever reason, Jesus' home was no longer Nazareth. Two, it could be that Jesus had literally come home *to his house*. The most exact translations say that "the people heard that he was *at home*."

And ...

So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Mark 2:2 (NIV)

So, Jesus is in a house which is considered to be his home, teaching a large group of people who are overflowing out into the front yard.

Who are these people? We'll see in just a minute.

Mark continues ...

Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.
Mark 2:3-4 (NIV)

Now, why do you think these guys were doing this? It's pretty obvious. They wanted their friend to be healed. After all, Jesus' reputation to this point had been built primarily on his healing miracles and they'd heard all the stories. And since Jesus was at home and the word was out that he was at home, they decided to bring their buddy to him for healing.

But what Jesus does next is very strange and unexpected.

Mark writes that ...

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."
Mark 2:4 (NIV)

Wait a minute – the guy is sick, paralyzed, and Jesus announces that his sins are forgiven? What's up with that?

The answer becomes clear in the very next verse.

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves "why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"
Mark 2:5-6 (NIV)

And this gives us a *lot* more detail about what is actually going on in this scene. Jesus is at his house and teaching – we know that – but the primary listeners to his teaching are a group of Pharisees who have come to listen to him, to visit him, to test him. They're seated in his living room while many others from the town crowd in around the doorway to hear the discussion.

And do you know what these Pharisees believe about serious illnesses and diseases and paralysis? *They believe that it's the result of sin.* In their minds, a sick man was a sinful man.ⁱⁱ

I cannot overstate the importance of this belief to understanding what's actually happening here. If you and I had been in this setting we would have simply seen a guy with paralysis being set before Jesus for healing. But what the teachers of the law see is a sinner, someone to be shunned because he (or his parents) had done something so offensive to God that God had physically cursed him!

And what does Jesus say to this guy? “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Actually, the word translated “son” is the Greek word “teknon” which is a term of endearment ... which means that Jesus is saying “*my* son ...” or even better “*my* child ... your sins are forgiven.” This lame man, this outcast, this beggar, this sinner is someone Jesus calls “my child.”

You can see how, in the mind of the Pharisees, the idea of Jesus as “the friend of sinners” is beginning to form.

By the way, the issue here is not that Jesus forgives the guy’s sin. Actually, He doesn’t do that at this point. The sentence is passive in form – “your sins are forgiven” – not the active “I forgive you.” At this point, all Jesus is doing is challenging the Pharisees’ understanding of God. He is announcing to them that the Father in Heaven is willing to accept a person who they believe is beyond forgiveness. The blasphemy is that Jesus would assume the right to declare that their tradition was wrong and that this person really was worthy of God’s love.ⁱⁱⁱ

Mark tells us that Jesus knew that this bothered the teachers of the law greatly ...

... and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?"
Mark 2:8-9 (NIV)

"But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..."
He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." *Mark 2:10-11 (NIV)*

Mark says that the man ...

... got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" *Mark 2:12 (NIV)*

It’s almost like Jesus was saying, “you don’t believe me? You don’t believe that this man is just as dear to God as you are? You don’t believe that God will take him as he is with no strings attached? You’re sadly mistaken. Not only is he all of that, I have the right to say these things about him because I have the power to forgive. I’ll prove it to you. Dear child, get up, take your mat and go home.”

And he did. And it amazed them.

Friends With a Tax Collector

Now, as we read on in this chapter of Mark, it’s apparent that this is only “part one” of the amazement of the Pharisees on this day. There’s a lot more to come. It’s going to get even more challenging for them.

Mark tells us that, after this healing, Jesus goes out of his house, goes by the lake, which would have been right there near his house because the town of Capernaum was located on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Think of it as Jesus taking a walk for some fresh air after the morning's "session" of teaching.

Of course the crowd from the morning session (which included the all the Pharisees and the teachers of the law) would have followed him and others, seeing that, would have joined in ... which is exactly what Mark says happened. There's this large crowd and Jesus is teaching them.

And, at some point ...

*As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth.
Mark 2:13 (NIV)*

Now, we've talked about this on several occasions before, so I won't go into a lot of detail. But, as a tax collector for the Romans, Levi – a Jew – was considered to be a political traitor ... which meant that the crowd in general would not hold him in high regard.

But to the Pharisees he was even more despised. He was a moral traitor – compromising the spiritual integrity of the nation of Israel – which meant that he, in their mind, was among the worst of sinners. "Surely," they thought, "men like this are beyond the love of God."

And what does Jesus do?

"Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. Mark 2:14 (NIV)

Now, because of the fact that Levi (who is also known as Matthew and we know that later he writes one of the four gospels called "The Gospel of Matthew") eventually leaves his tax-collecting profession and becomes a disciple of Jesus, it's easy to think that's what's going on here. Jesus says "follow me" and Levi literally leaves his whole life, his business and everything, behind and follows Jesus.

And that might be what happened but I think something a lot less dramatic is going on. I think Jesus was simply saying, "Hey, Levi, come here. I want you to hang out with me for a while."

And Levi said, "Ok. What do you want to do?"

The first part of the next verse tells us what Jesus wanted to do. It starts off by saying ...

While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house ... Mark 2:15 (NIV)

What did Jesus want to do? He wanted to have dinner with Levi.

But where? Well, this translation says it was at Levi's house.

But if you look at a more literal translation, like the New American Standard Bible, it says:

*And it came about that He [Jesus] was reclining at the table in his house ... Mark 2:15
(NASB77)*

Whose house? The personal pronoun in the original language isn't descriptive enough for us to know whether the meal takes place at Levi's house or back at the home where Jesus healed the paralyzed man that morning. In either case, it's scandalous, but the thought that Jesus would have invited Levi over for dinner – wow. That says a lot, doesn't it?

And it's even more scandalous when you read the rest of that verse. It says that not only was Jesus hosting Levi (or vice versa), but that:

Many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. Mark 2:15 (NIV)

It's almost like word had gotten around among the spiritual rejects of the town. "Hey, did you hear? Jesus healed a God-forsaken lame man this morning and then hung out with a God-forsaken tax collector this afternoon."

"Are you kidding?"

"Nope."

"Well, according to the Pharisees, we're God-forsaken, too. I wonder if He would hang out with us and teach us, too?"

"Let's go find out." And they went to the house and were invited in for dinner.

All of which gave rise to that question we read earlier.

When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Mark 2:16 (NIV)

"We don't get it. He believes the same scriptures that we do. But three times today, we've seen him open wide his arms to people who clearly are outside the family of faith. He's not told them how offensive they are to God. He's not warned them to repent and turn from sin. Instead, He's making friends with these people! How can this be?"

Mark tells us that Jesus overheard this discussion and responded to the Pharisees directly.

He said:

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Mark 2:17 (NIV)

And that was as radical of a statement as these men had ever heard: that God would actually seek out and befriend sinners *before* they had repented.

And you can understand why it would seem so radical to them. As one commentator puts it, the concern of the Pharisees “is not without merit. They are upholding wisdom that has been gained painfully through the centuries. The Old Testament emphasized that Israelites must separate themselves from pagan tribes. The Talmud taught, ‘Associate not with the wicked man, even if you can learn from him.’ The writer of Psalm 26 believes he deserves God’s blessing, because, as he puts it ‘I hate the company of evildoers, and will not sit with the wicked’ (Psalm 26:5).

Bottom line: “bad company corrupts and we’re going to stay away from it!”^{iv} And rightfully so.

So, in the minds of the Pharisees, keeping the “religious community” from being infected by that “bad company” was paramount.

But Jesus that day turned that kind of thinking on its ear with his deeds and his words. “God’s priority,” he was saying, “is not the avoidance of infection. It’s to offer healing to the infected. Yes, the danger of sin and corruption is real. But the love of God for these *dear children* trumps the fear of that danger. They are worth the risk of befriending even if they *never* repent.”

Lessons Learned

So ... what lessons can we learn from this day in the life of Jesus that might help us as we attempt to show grace to the “sinners” in our lives? I think there are three lessons.

1. “Sinners” are not merely rebels; they are also victims in need of compassion.

That’s the point of the healing that takes place in Jesus’ living room. And Jesus then specifically says it in his explanation to the Pharisees. “I’ve come for the sick ... I’ve come for those who have been victimized by the power of evil.”

And, friends, that’s what sin does. It makes us its victim. For one thing, as we have talked about repeatedly in this series, it kills us spiritually. Because of sin – because of rebellion against God’s laws –

the whole human race is “dead in sin” Paul writes in Ephesians Chapter 2.

Beyond that, though, the Bible says that sin also enslaves people. It becomes their master and drives them to do its bidding.

Earlier this summer, Jetta and I got hooked on a TV show from a couple of years ago called *Prison Break*. Maybe you’ve seen it. It’s kind of a dark show and you’ve got to hang with it for awhile. We thought we were going to bail on it but actually it turned out to be fascinating. And one of the most fascinating things about the show was that the characters were continually forced to do bad things that they didn’t want to do because there was a greater evil than them (known as “The Company”) that would do bad things to them and their families if they didn’t obey. They were trapped. They were enslaved. At the same exact time as they were perpetrators they were also victims.

That’s how sin works.

So, when you and I look at people who we think of as “really bad sinners” we need to remember that they are victims who are being *destroyed* by sin as well as well as rebels who are *committing* sin. That’s how Jesus looked at the tax collectors and “sinners” of his day.

And when you remember that someone is a victim, what does it do to you? It raises your compassion. I’m sure you’ve heard about the typhoon that just hit the Philippines killing almost 10,000 people. Nearly 800,000 people were forced from their homes. And you know what’s going to happen? Worldwide, as more of the story gets out, there will be a massive outpouring of compassion simply because those people in the Philippines are victims ... even though, if you could line them all up and do a moral inventory, you would see that some of those people are not very good people, but they’re suffering and they’re victims and we will show compassion.

Now, just to be clear, saying that people are victims of sin is not meant to minimize or excuse sin. It’s to remind us why God is gracious in spite of it and why we who have received grace should also be gracious.

The second thing we can learn from this amazing day in the life of Jesus is that ...

2. God is not inviting sinners to *live better lives*. God is inviting sinners to *life* (and so should we).

Jesus clearly was not on a “clean-up your morals” crusade which is part of why the Pharisees were so frustrated with him.

Now, that’s not to say that He never addressed the issue of morality with people but whenever he did, it always came *after* He had extended grace to them. Jesus never told a person “go clean up this part of your life and then you will be worthy of salvation, and worthy of my love and my grace.”

Well, that's not exactly true. Once he told a rich guy to sell everything and give all the money to the poor and follow him and then he would inherit eternal life. But that was a guy who believed he was already perfect and *deserved* eternal life, so Jesus told him to do the one thing that *he would not do* which demonstrated to him clearly that he was far from perfect.

So the point remains. Jesus never told a "sinner" to "live a better life" without first offering them grace.

Why was that? It's because, again, as we have seen repeatedly in this series, the fundamental problem with human beings is not that we are bad to whatever degree. It's that we are born dead spiritually because of sin. And what dead people need is a resurrection. It's life. And that is what grace brings us.

God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. It is only by God's grace that you have been saved! Ephesians 2:4-5 (NLT)

Saving grace produces new life. Jesus described it as being born again from above by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And this, friends, has huge implications for how we react to the sin of sinners around us. Our goal as Christians is not to get a person to turn from a specific sin or set of sins – which is merely a religiously motivated self-improvement project. Our goal is to help people turn to Christ in faith for new life.

... which is why Paul continued in his letter to the Ephesians ...

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

As Christians, our primary concern is not with getting the gluttonous to quit their gluttony, or the greedy to quit their greediness, or the gays to quit their "gayness" (for lack of a better term). Even if we could do that, it would be of no help to them before God since salvation is not a reward for cleaning up your act as we just read.

Plus, if you even could get a glutton to repent of and quit their gluttony, what about all the other sins they commit? Suppose they're also greedy and, heaven forbid, gay?

Friends, we have to get this straight: Jesus did not come to teach the teachable, reform the reformable, perfect the perfectible or improve the improvable ... Jesus came to raise the dead.^v

Which is why, especially when we are dealing with someone on "the other side" concerning one of the moral hot buttons of our day, we need to remember that the goal is not to win an argument about

whether a certain behavior is sin or not. It's to win a person; a person who is a victim of sin and needs compassion and who needs *life in Christ*.

Even if they won't agree that whatever you're debating actually is a sin, they are still both a perpetrator and victim of the universal and general human propensity to screw things up (which is just another way of describing sin^{vi}). What are they going to do about *that*? Even if there's disagreement about what is actually a sin, what are they going to do about that propensity to constantly fail and fall? *That alone* is reason enough for any of us to turn to Christ.

This is why when Jesus called Levi he did not first get into a long debate over the morality of his profession. He didn't have to because Levi already knew that his entire life had been marred by sin. Details didn't matter at that point. And what Levi needed to do, all Levi needed to do, was to say "yes" to Jesus – to just follow Him – and see where it led. And in the process, whatever needed to be cleaned up in Levi's life would be cleaned up as the Holy Spirit began to change him.

God is not inviting sinners to live better lives. God is inviting sinners to new life in Christ (and so should we).

Ok, one more lesson to learn from this remarkable day in the life of Jesus. If we're talking about hating sin in the life of sinners we love, I think it's clear from his interaction with the Pharisees that ...

3. We should hate *our* sin as much or more than *theirs*.

See, this was the real problem with the Pharisees. It wasn't so much that they could clearly see what great sinners the tax collectors and prostitutes and other riff-raff Jesus befriended were. It was that they could not see what great sinners they themselves were and so, they scorned everyone else ... which is why, on another occasion, Jesus told them this story:

"Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don't cheat, I don't sin, and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.' Luke 18:10-12 (NLT)

"But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' Luke 18:13 (NLT)

And Jesus concluded:

I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be

exalted.” Luke 18:14 (NLT)

And that is a heartwarming story in some ways because it's the underdog coming out on top and we all love that, but when you stand back from the emotion of that story, what strikes you is that this is a very harsh judgment Jesus is making! I mean, the Pharisee was actually doing a lot of good things with his life – better than a lot of us!

So why was Jesus so hard on him?

It's because he failed to see that if he had ever made any right choices in his life, those choices came only by the grace of God and not by his own goodness. And therefore, he was arrogant and judgmental which the Bible says in Proverbs 6:16 God absolutely despises and hates. You should look it up sometime. There's a list of all the things that just make God sick. And the number one thing on that list is that God hates people who look down on others thinking that they are better.

And that's why, as one author puts it: “I cannot self-righteously judge someone who (for example) has made the decision to get an abortion. I *can* judge the act as sin based upon God's revelation (in the scripture), but I cannot in any way say to myself that if I were that person, having faced the same circumstances, having the same upbringing, and having the same genetic inclinations, that I would make a different decision.

In fact, I can say with much assurance that unless God were to intervene, I would make *the exact same choice* because I am prone, just as they are, to go astray.”^{vii}

And I think that attitude is crucial when it comes to dealing with those in our lives who we consider to be “the big sinners.”

- We really have to believe that “there but for the grace of God go I.”
- We really have to believe that while our sins may not be their sins, our sins are just as offensive to God; our sins have caused us to need a savior just as bad as theirs have caused them to need a savior. And we hate our sins and what they do to us as much as we hate their sins and what they do to them.

And when that really begins to take hold of us and we really start to believe that, we will become characterized by a humility and a gentleness of spirit. It will become obvious on those rare occasions when we do need to talk to someone about their sin that it is because we love them and we want them to be free; not because we're the self-appointed guardians of morality and “somebody somewhere needs to draw the line.”

Conclusion

So, there you have it: three lessons that might be pretty helpful when it comes to dealing with the sinners in our lives.

- They are not merely rebels; they're also victims in need of compassion.
- God is not inviting them to live better lives. God is inviting them to life in Christ (and that should be our goal as well).
- We should hate our sin as much or more than theirs.

So, based on those lessons, if you were the father in that drama what would you have done? Fortunately I've never been in that situation so I can't say for sure because there are lots of factors and everybody has different factors in life. But as I think through this, I'd like to think I would have said, "Yes, you are welcome here in my house."

And imagine how that would have played out. The daughter would have said, "What???? Daddy I know you are dead set against this! I know this violates everything you believe to be true."

And the father would have said, "You're right, it does, and I don't like this. I love you and I really fear for what this is going to do to you in your future because sin always destroys in some way or another. But, honey, I've got to tell you, God has been so gracious to me in all of the many mistakes I've made in my life, so I can be gracious to you. See you this weekend."

Can you imagine what a surprise that would be to the daughter – and in a good way? She would be treated far better than she expected and, quite frankly, far better than she deserved. And in that she would have receive a taste of *God's* grace.

And that, friends, is part of what we're here for as followers of Jesus: to offer a taste of God's grace to the world around us. We'll talk more about that next week but, for now, let's pray.

<prayer>

God, thank you so much for the example of Jesus and how we read story after story after story of how he treated people, not compromising his values but speaking with an overflowing grace to people that was attractive. God, that's what we want to be. God, the truth is, all of us, me, we're all in the same boat - we are not like that. We just confess that to be true of us. And some of us are thinking of people in our lives wondering "how can I ever be gracious to that person? He's such a jerk. He's done such terrible things." That's where we are. That's the truth about us. But, we want to thank you for already forgiving us for that ungraciousness. God, let us be so gripped by the realization that in your sight, our sin is really big but that your grace is even bigger. And may that

cause the grace to overflow from us to others. We thank you for the way you love us, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Feature – But for the Grace of God

CLOSING COMMENTS

Grieving Through the Holidays tonight

Endnotes

ⁱ Many sincere believers these days are moving away from this phraseology because of how it is often misconstrued by the homosexual community. Rather than attempt to define it more clearly, many are dropping it altogether which is understandable in a world where communication of important ideas is regularly reduced to sound-bites.

ⁱⁱ Commentary on Mark 2, Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT)

ⁱⁱⁱ Brilliant insight from Brian Stoffregen at <http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/mark2x1.htm> and <http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/mark2x13.htm>.

^{iv} From <http://www.lectionary.org/English/matthew/02-06-09,%20Proper%205A,%20Matt%209.9-13,%2018-26.htm>

^v Robert Capon

^{vi} HPtFtu is how Francis Sufford describes this in his book Unapologetic.

^{vii} <http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2007/02/judge-not-what-does-that-mean/>