

The Great Pretender Romans 1:20-32 KJV

Text: “[20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; and so that they are without excuse: [21] Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. [22] Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, [23] And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. [24] Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: [25] Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. [26] For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: [27] And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. [28] And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; [29] Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, [30] Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, [31] Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: [32] Who knowing the judgment ah of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have ai pleasure in them that do them.”

It is not my purpose in this message to consider every question relating to homosexuality and sexual sin. I will not spend any time discussing the various scientific and psychological theories concerning the origin of homosexuality.

My purpose is very straightforward. I want to tell you what the Bible says about homosexuality and sexual sin. I hope that after hearing this message you will be better able to pray with others struggling with these issues. In particular, I hope that you will be able to get past the rhetoric of our day and come to a truly Christian position.

Many will ask, why is a church getting involved in this? Isn't this sermon an attempt to mix politics and religion? Answer: Absolutely. All political decisions are ultimately based on ethical considerations. Most of the time the church does better to remain silent simply because it has greater work to do. However, occasionally there arises an issue which touches the moral foundations of our society. At that point, the church of Jesus Christ has a solemn responsibility before God to speak His Word clearly. In the day of controversy God's church must not be silent.

It seems to me that this is such a day, and that homosexuality is such an issue. At the very least, we need to know what God's Word says so that we can form some firm convictions and so that we will have an answer to give to our friends and neighbors. In the moments that are before us, I would like to ask and answer three questions:

First, What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

Second, Is there hope for the homosexual?

Third, How should the church respond to this crisis?

I. What Does The Bible Say About Homosexuality?

In deciding an issue of this magnitude it will not do for us merely to proof-text our position. Certainly, there are key passages which speak rather clearly. If the matter is to be settled, however, we must find a position which fits into the entire fabric of the biblical revelation. We want to know what the whole Bible says on this issue.

A. God's Pattern Of Creation

1. Genesis 1-2

We do not have to read very far in the Bible to discover how God intended the human race to function. The first chapter of the very first book contains information which is crucial for us to consider. Consider these words from Genesis 1: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness.'" (26) "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (27) "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and increase in number.'" (28)

Four facts stand out in these verses:

First, to be made in the image of God means to have an essential likeness or similarity to God. The underlying meaning is one of "correspondence." To be made in God's image means that man the created is to correspond somehow to God the Creator.

Second, that "image" is shared by the whole human race. Let me say that clearly. Every person who is born on the earth is made in God's image regardless of race, color, nationality, gender, age, or physical condition. Everyone who hears my words is made in God's image: male and female. Everyone is made in God's image and no one can take that away from you.

Third, that "image" is to be found in man and woman, male and female. That is, there is a sense in which God's image is seen in the relationship, the union if you will, of a man and a woman. God creates man as male and woman as female. It is only in the divine

creation of man and woman that we see God's highest ideal in creation. (The Bond That Breaks: Will Homosexuality Split the Church?, p. 53)

Was Adam created in God's image? Yes. Was Eve created in God's image? Yes. Genesis 1:27 clearly teaches that certain aspects of God's nature are uniquely and only reflected in the male-female relationship.

(Fourth) And that leads me to the fourth fact: One purpose of sexual differentiation is procreation. Man and woman are to "be fruitful and multiply." There is a part of God's image which is reflected in the coming together of man and woman. When a man and woman come together, they imitate God in their creative activity. In the bringing forth of new life, they are doing what God did in the Garden of Eden.

Consider how Genesis 2 puts the matter. Adam is created by God but he is lonely. None of the animals can satisfy his deep need for someone who is like him, yet different from him. So God says, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). He needed a helper suitable for him. That helper was not another man but was a woman. The divine intention in creating Eve is clearly set forth in Genesis 2:24: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother, and be united to his wife; and they will become one flesh."

The account of creation is perfectly clear that heterosexuality is God's design for the human race. Full humanity includes both male and female. Marriage between a man and woman is thus good and pure and holy. Sexual relations within marriage are thus sanctified.

Homosexuality must be seen as something outside of God's design for the human race. It represents a denial of the two-fold nature of man as male and female. It is a deviation in the truest sense of the word.

The importance of Genesis 1-2 cannot be overemphasized. It is the foundation upon which the entire Bible rests. Our estimate of man and woman, of male and female, of human sexuality, and of homosexuality, must be in accord with what these passages reveal, that is, one man with one woman becoming one flesh.

Homosexuals cannot become one flesh, cannot be fruitful and multiply, cannot adequately reflect the fullness of the image of God, and cannot discharge their sexual drives in a manner consistent with God's Word. In summary, homosexuality is completely outside God's original design for humanity.

There is another way of putting it. If God had intended for homosexuality to be the norm, he would have created Adam and Steve instead of Adam and Eve. That sounds like a throw-away line, but it actually catches the essence of my argument. God created a man called Adam and a woman called Eve precisely because that was to be the pattern

for the human race. To substitute a man with a man or a woman with a woman is to distort God's original design.

(It is worth adding at this point that many people have overlooked the importance of Genesis 1-2 in the discussion of homosexuality. That is a fundamental mistake, because the various prohibitions against homosexual behavior can be fully understood only in light of God's original design. Discussing homosexuality without referring to Genesis 1-2 is like trying to fix a car without reading the owner's manual.)

2. Matthew 19:4-6

When we come to consider the words of Jesus Christ we find nothing which contradicts that basic conclusion. To be straightforward about the matter, Jesus had nothing directly to say about homosexuality. However, he did have some very important things to say about marriage. As a general summary, we can say that whenever Christ mentioned marriage he upheld it as a divinely ordained institution.

In Matthew 19:4 some Pharisees asked him a tricky question about divorce. His answer is very revealing.

First, Jesus quoted Genesis 1:27, "At the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female.'"

Second, Jesus then quoted Genesis 2:24, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." (5)

Third, Jesus concludes in Matthew 19:6 that "they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

The point is clear. Jesus looked upon human sexuality precisely as it is revealed in Genesis 1-2. He recognized that man is created both male and female and the union of opposite sexes into one flesh is God's plan for humanity. He thus endorses heterosexuality in the strongest way possible.

Where, then, does homosexuality fit in? It doesn't fit in at all. It is eliminated by virtue of the fact that it contradicts God's original plan, a plan laid down in the book of Genesis and later endorsed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Specific Bible Passages On Homosexuality

With that foundation clearly in mind, we turn to consider the various biblical passages which directly address the question of homosexuality. There are seven of them: four in the Old Testament, three in the New Testament.

1. The Old Testament Passages

a. Genesis 19

The first passage is the account of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. It tells the story of a man named Lot who was visited by two angels at the gate of the city. That night all the men of the city surrounded Lot's house and said, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." (5) That their interest was carnal and corrupt is made clear by Lot's response in verse 8: "Look, I have two daughters here who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof."

Whatever you may think of Lot's morals, it is clear that he understands the men were inflamed with homosexual lust. The citizens of Sodom were not satisfied with his answer, and were reaching out to knock him out of the way when the Lord struck the crowd with blindness. The city was eventually destroyed because of its great wickedness. And what was the great wickedness? Clearly, it was the desire for homosexual rape.

The New Testament provides graphic confirmation of this judgment in Jude 7: "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."

Greg Bahnsen aptly concludes that "Sodom was utterly destroyed because it was a city full of homosexuals who day after day practiced their impious, sensual debauchery." (Homosexuality: A Biblical View, pp. 34-35) That has been the understanding of this passage throughout church history. And it is worth remembering that the most common word for homosexual activity is sodomy.

b. Leviticus Chapters 18:22 and 20:13

Two verses in Leviticus deserve mention. Both are part of the law code for ancient Israel. Leviticus 18:22 categorically states that "You shall not lie with a male as with a female. It is an abomination." Leviticus 20:13 is similar: "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."

In the latter passage, homosexuality is mentioned as a capital offense along with adultery (10), incest (11-12), polygamy (14), bestiality (15-16).

Clearly God considered the practice of homosexuality as a terrible and degrading sin - a sin worthy of death in the nation of Israel.

The crucial point to notice is that homosexuality is a perversion of God's order and is classed with other heinous sins.

Obviously, we do not live today under the Mosaic law. How do these verses from 3500 years ago affect us today? They are crucial because they reveal to us the heart of God. We already know His intention that we should live together as male and female.

These verses substantiate that fact by showing us that deviations from that heterosexual norm are severely judged by God.

c. Judges 19

This is the final passage in the Old Testament on the subject of homosexuality.

It is similar to the story of Lot and the men of Sodom. A certain Levite visited the city of Gibeah. He and his concubine were given shelter by an old man. While the Levite was in the old man's house a gang of wicked men gathered outside and demanded that the old man send the Levite out to them so they could satisfy their homosexual desires.

The old man replied, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this disgraceful thing." (Judges 19:23)

The old man offered to send out his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine, but the crowd didn't want that. The Levite ended up sending out his concubine who was raped and abused and died the next morning.

Let us be honest and say that no one looks good in this story - not the Levite who actually sent his concubine outside, not the old man who offered his virgin daughter, and not the wicked mob who were inflamed with homosexual lust. Nobody looks good; they're all corrupt and polluted. It is, however, a good example of what happens when men reject God's law and do what is right in their own eyes. Widespread homosexuality is one mark of a society that has forgotten God.

2. New Testament Passages

There are three New Testament passages which specifically mention homosexuality. Each one adds something important to the discussion. We will take them in reverse order.

a. I Timothy 1

In this context Paul is discussing the proper use of God's law. His general statement on the subject is that the law is not bad but good, a fact readily admitted by those who keep its precepts. He goes on to point out that law is not meant for those who keep it, but rather for those who break it.

He goes on to list a number of categories of people who break God's law": lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; those who kill their fathers or mothers, murderers, adulterers and homosexuals, kidnappers, liars and perjurers." (1 Timothy 1:9-10)

Homosexuals are again listed with murderers, idolaters, kidnappers, liars, and other immoral men. Nothing could be clearer than the fact that Paul fully shared the Old Testament view that homosexuality was a vile sin worthy of classification with the most terrible acts man could perform.

b. I Corinthians 6

In this passage Paul is stressing the ethical difference between Christians and non-Christians. Evidently there was tremendous moral laxity among the believers at Corinth. Some were even visiting prostitutes and attempting to justify it theologically (6:12-20).

I Corinthians 6:9-10 is a passage which bears directly on the issue of whether a person can be a practicing homosexual and a Christian at the same time. "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, nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."

Now what does it mean to "inherit the kingdom of God?" It means to have a place in God's kingdom.

No one who does the things Paul mentioned will have a place in the kingdom of God. Does that mean that a homosexual can never be saved? No, not at all. Anyone can be saved no matter what sins they may have committed. But Paul is saying that no one can be saved who continues in his sin, who takes pleasure in it, who does it without reservation or guilt, who has no desire to change. For such a person there truly is no hope. They have chosen sin over salvation, bondage over deliverance, guilt over forgiveness, and death over life. Such a person will not, cannot enter the kingdom of God.

The issue is really not homosexuality at all. It is coming to grips with your own sinful behavior. Until you are willing to view it the way God views it, you cannot be saved, for until you truly believe that you are a sinner, you have nothing from which to be saved.

c. Romans 1

At last we come to the central passage in the Bible on homosexuality.

Romans 1 is part of Paul's larger argument showing that all men are guilty before God. Paul addresses three things:

1. The case of the irreligious Gentile (Roman's 1:18-32), then
2. The moral man (Romans 2:1-16), then
3. The Jew (Romans 2:17-3:9).

He comes to the same conclusion in all three cases, "There is no one righteous, not even one." (Romans 3:10)

The mention of homosexuality occurs in the section dealing with the Gentiles. Romans 1 details what happens in any society that determines to ignore God.

As they turn away from God, three things happen:

1. Their hearts are darkened (Romans 1:21)
2. Their professed wisdom only shows their foolishness (Romans 1:22), and
3. They ultimately turn to idolatry (Romans 1:23).

Please note that in Paul's mind this is not a description of Rome or Greece or Russia or America. It is a description of any society at any time in any place that willfully rejects the God of the Bible. What Paul is talking about is always true.

What is the result of a society turning its back on God? The answer comes in triplicate:

- (Roman's 1:24) "God gave them over." To Sexual Impurity
- (Romans 1:26) "God gave them over." To Homosexual Acts
- (Roman's 1:28) "God gave them over." To Homosexual Civilization

What happens to a society that suppresses the truth about God, turns away from His revelation, and exalts the creature over the Creator? God abandons them. He simply lets them go on in their sin until the society is completely given to depravity. The greatest judgment by God is not HIV or AIDS, but allowing the nation to 1) change its thinking about homosexuals, 2) change its desires about homosexuality, and 3) become a homosexual civilization. (Jerry Falwell: "God's Three Deadlines")

There is no lightning, no fire, no earthquake, no famine. Something much worse. God doesn't intervene, which leads to moral chaos, resulting in a society that devours itself in its own lust. In this case God's judgment is to do nothing and let men bring on themselves their own damnation.

The **first** result of such divine abandonment is widespread lust, impurity, and open immorality. (Romans 1:24)

The **second** result is open homosexuality. Note the clear words of verses 26-28: "Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 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.

Furthermore, **third**, 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."

It is difficult to imagine a stronger condemnation of homosexuality. It is the result of a "depraved mind," the action of someone willfully suppressing the truth of God and surrendering to the impure desires of the flesh.

Paul concludes his condemnation of the Gentiles by listing in verses Romans 1:29-31 a number of sins they commonly commit.

Summing up his entire argument (including the section on homosexuality), he says in Romans 1:32 that "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." One translation has it, "they give hearty approval." Such is precisely the situation in our day.

There are some people who not only continue in their sin, but they also heartily approve of those who practice these things.

It is occasionally said that God does not single out homosexuality, that it is no worse than any other sin.

In one sense that is true since no extra requirements are laid on homosexuals than any other by God. They may be saved just as easily and quickly as anyone else. God's grace is available to all people without distinction. God does not discriminate in dispensing His grace. Anyone who comes to Jesus Christ will find their sins forgiven. In that sense, we're all in the same boat. Without Jesus Christ, nobody has a chance.

Having said that, however, we must not miss the emphasis of this passage. Widespread homosexuality is a mark of a society that has forgotten God and rejected His word. In that sense, homosexuality is singled out for special treatment. Why? Because it is, as Howard Snyder puts it, "a primary symptom of total moral decay." (Letter to The Other Side 14:6, 1978, p. 2)

C. Conclusion

Let's pull together the various strands of biblical teaching on this subject.

First of all, Genesis 1-2 affirms that heterosexuality is God's design for the human race and that the image of God is uniquely reflected in the male-female union.

Second, Genesis 19 illustrates God's judgment on an attempted homosexual rape.

Third, Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13 offers clear prohibitions against homosexual behavior with death the penalty for violating the law.

Fourth, Judges 19 shows how homosexuality is one mark of a society which has lost its moral compass. In short, the Old Testament condemns homosexuality both by principle and precept.

Fifth, When we come to the gospels, we find that Jesus Christ upheld the view that heterosexuality is God's plan for mankind.

Sixth, Paul twice classes homosexuals with murderers, adulterers, and other immoral people. He also clearly states that unrepentant, practicing homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God. Romans 1 shows that widespread, blatant homosexuality is a key sign of a depraved society which has deliberately turned away from God.

The evidence is overwhelming. Homosexual behavior in any form is wrong. It is a degraded and degrading sin. It is a horrible lifestyle. There is nothing gay about it.

Protestations about true love and meaningful relationships do not change God's verdict.

Furthermore, no one was ever created by God to be homosexual. What I am saying is that when it comes to homosexuality, the lifestyle is sinful, the behavior is sinful, and so is the lust that goes with it. For those who take the Bible seriously, there can be no other answer.

II. Is There Hope For The Homosexual?

I could not blame anyone: especially someone struggling with the issue of homosexuality for listening to everything I have just said and concluding that there is no hope. After all, I have painted the situation in rather bleak terms. But I am happy to say that there is more to the story than condemnation.

Let's go back to I Corinthians 6, back to the passage where Paul talked about certain people who would not inherit the kingdom of God. A moment ago I read verses 9 and 10.

But I didn't read verse 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."

The past tenses are very significant ... You were, you were, you were. The church at Corinth included adulterers, murderers, and homosexuals who had been completely changed. Paul knew something that the professed scientific "experts" don't know today. He knew practicing homosexuals who had been completely changed. They had been washed from their sins, their desires had been redirected, and they had been justified before God.

How did it happen? Paul is explicit. It happened through a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ. When the adulterers met Jesus Christ, they became former adulterers. When the slanderers met him, they were slanderers no more. And when the homosexuals met Him, they were homosexuals no more.

I am not naive enough to suggest that simply praying a prayer and asking Jesus into your heart will suddenly take away the deep desires within. Nor do I think that coming to Christ will erase the years of learned behavior. It is not as simple as that.

The homosexual desire is so strong, so intense, so all-encompassing that it will not easily be conquered. If you are gay, leaving the homosexual lifestyle will be the hardest thing you will ever do.

But I do believe that without Jesus Christ there is no hope for lasting, permanent change.

The testimony of modern psychology is that it is virtually bankrupt when it comes to changing the homosexual. The current cry for acceptance is testimony to the impotence of secular humanism. Most modern counselors do not try to change the homosexual because they have no lasting help to offer.

What does it mean? It means we must never soft-pedal sin and coddle the sinner. It also means we must never turn him away. The church of Jesus Christ has the only answer for those trapped in the devastating homosexual lifestyle. The word "gay" is indeed a cruel hoax, covering up the frustration, the despair, the anxiety, the guilt brought on by the chains of sexual sin.

Indeed, in Jesus Christ complete deliverance is possible. If those in need cannot find the answer from God's Word, then I fear the answer is nowhere to be found.

Let us suppose that someone who reads these words is struggling with issues relating to homosexuality. And let us suppose that you truly want to be set free. What principles will help you along the way? Here are some things that you need:

1. Utter and complete honesty about your true condition. The Bible says that God desires truth in the inward parts. Until you are willing to come clean, you will never be made clean.
2. Sincere confession that you are totally helpless to change yourself. The theologians call this the doctrine of Total Inability. It is the recognition that without God's help, you don't have a chance.
3. Uncompromising, tenacious loyalty to the person of Jesus Christ. You must cling to the Lord Jesus Christ with dogged perseverance. You must not let Him go. You must make loyalty to Him your watchword every day, every hour, every minute, every second. Only bulldog loyalty to Jesus can sustain you in the inevitable moments of temptation.
4. Commitment to a process of personal counseling. If you want out of the homosexual lifestyle, you have a ton of work you need to do. You need the help of someone who can compassionately and carefully lead you along the pathway of change.
5. An accepting environment in which progress can be made. You need to be surrounded by brothers and sisters who can help you to reorient your whole way of thinking. And you need an environment where your identity is not simply "ex-gay" but also "teacher, writer, engineer, secretary, lawyer, technician, executive, manager, and just-plain-old-ordinary-person."

Where can such a place be found? Where if not in the church?

And that brings the discussion back home. What will we do and how will we respond? How should we feel and what should we say?

III. How Should The Church Respond To This Crisis?

Let me consider that question from several different angles.

First, pray all you can and know all you can: be prepared: (2 Timothy 2:15 KJVS) [15] “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Second, don't be afraid of the “Woke” crowd: (Jeremiah 1:8 KJVS) [8] “Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.” Speak clearly and with compassion to those who don't hold to the truth.

Third, how should we as Christians respond to homosexuals generally? Some things are obvious. I think we ought to once and for all put aside all unkind comments, crude jokes, and pejorative terms. It does no good to speak of “queers,” “fags,” “fruits” and “fairies.” How would you like to be on the receiving end of words like that? All it can do is hurt another person. It cannot help them and it cannot help you. And if you run with the kind of crowd where you need to say things like that to be accepted, then I think you need to get a new set of friends.

When homosexuals visit our churches, they know how we feel. They sense it. They know we don't feel comfortable. And they either go to church, never revealing the truth, living a double life, worshiping on Sunday and living another way during the week, or they leave the church altogether.

Let me say it plainly. The men and women who are practicing sinners are made in God's image just as much as we are. We all need God's grace equally. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) Jesus died for them just as he died for us. Actually, there really isn't any “them” and “us.” We're all just people. We're all made from the same clay.

To say that is not to back off one iota from the things I said earlier. But it is to say that we must live what we say we believe. If the gospel really is the power of God unto salvation, if it really does change lives, then we must offer it to all men and all women, without exception and without restriction.

Can homosexuals attend church? Yes. Will they be welcomed here? Yes. Can they find friendship here? Yes. Can they find Jesus Christ here? Yes. Will we open our doors to the gay community? Yes. Will we continue to teach what the Bible says? Yes. The local church must hold the line both ways that homosexual behavior is always wrong but complete deliverance is available in Jesus Christ.

Here's the bottom line. If we refuse to welcome sinners because they are "dirty" and we are "clean," then we ought to close the doors, shut the windows, lock up tight, and take the sign down out front. For when we close our doors to anyone in need we are denying with our lives the very gospel we proclaim with our lips.

Fourth, I'd like to say a word to those struggling with issues of homosexuality. I'm glad you are seeking for God's best in your life. Those of us on the pastoral staff would be glad to talk with you. We won't lower the boom on you. You've already heard what we believe. Maybe you'd like to tell us your story. We'd be glad to listen to you. If you don't feel comfortable doing that, just write me a letter and tell me your story. You don't have to sign it. Just tell your story in the best way you can. We'll listen to you.

In the gospels Jesus is called "the friend of sinners." What a wonderful title. Is there anything better that could be said about a Christian? Is there anything better that could be said about a Church? Would that it were written in the sky: Jesus is the Friend of Sinners."

Prayer

Heavenly Father, You alone are holy. In your presence we are all sinners and our righteousness is as filthy rags. Grant hope to those who need it. Give us hearts of compassion for our broken brothers and sisters. Grant new life for them and new hearts for us. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Friend of Sinners. Amen.

Appendix – Resource Guide On Homosexuality

Resource: Ray Pritchard: Keep Believing Ministries

I. Books

Amos, William Jr. When Aids Comes To Church. Westminster Press., 1988.

Baker, Don. Beyond Rejection. Multnomah Press, 1985. Tells of the inner turmoil of a husband struggling with homosexuality and his wife's response. A model for the how church leaders should respond.

Dietrich, John, M.D. and Glenn Wood, M.D. The Aids Epidemic. Multnomah Press, 1990.

Hurst, Ed. Overcoming Homosexuality. David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1987. A valuable tool for anyone investigating the possibility of change.

Moberly, Elizabeth. Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic. James Clarke and Co., 1983.

Dr. Moberly is a psychiatrist who argues that the practice of homosexuality is a learned behavior.

Perry, Shireen. In *Sickness and in Health*. InterVarsity Press, 1989. Moving story of a former homosexual who marries a woman and then discovers he has AIDS. Also on video.

Saia, Michael. *Counseling the Homosexual*. Bethany House, 1988. A compassionate and biblical guide for pastors and counselors as well as anyone struggling with homosexuality or affected by the struggle.

Schwartz, Michael. *Gays, AIDS, and You*. Devin Adair Company, 1987. Exposes the political agenda of the Gay Rights movement.

Smith, Shepherd and Anita Moreland Smith. *Christians in the Age of Aids*. Victor Books, 1990.

Stott, John. *Homosexual Partnerships*. InterVarsity Press, 1984. Explains why homosexuality is wrong, even in the context of a permanent relationship.

II. Videos

AIDS-What You Haven't Been Told. Jeremiah Films, 1989. 75 minutes.

In Sickness and in Health. CBN Publishing, 1988. 25 minutes.

III. Christian Ministries To Homosexuals

Exodus: P.O. Box 2121; San Rafael, California 94912 (415) 454-1017

Outpost: 734 E. Lake Street, Suite 218; Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407 (612) 827-1419

Overcomers: 5445 N. Clark Street; Chicago, Illinois 60640 (312) 334-5159 (They also meet in Wheaton.)