

“Can Love Be Wrong?”

Romans 13:8-10

Sermon Series: “True Love In An Unloving World”

Introduction:

Can love ever be wrong? No, if it's true love. But does that mean any sexual expression of “love” or that is called love is right? If it's love, can it be wrong? But does that mean that anything that is called love is right? Examples: Domestic partner, same sex relationship, Somebody saying he loves his wife and mistress, somebody saying I love all my wives, somebody saying I love a close relative in that way, 60 year old man and 13 year old girl, I love my mannequin, I love my animal,

Are you a mean-spirited, narrow-minded, bigot if you think homosexual sexual activity is morally wrong? Or if you think gender is a fixed, biological reality?

Doesn't all of this come back to whether or not its right or wrong? How do we know what is right and wrong and act with love when it comes to gender and sexuality? Let's begin by reviewing the principles we looked at 2 weeks ago in Romans 13:8-10.

1. Love is the summation of and fulfillment of the Law so it is impossible to separate love and morality (v.9-10).

-There is objective morality. That is the premise I am operating from. I don't have time to develop that, but I spent a lot of time on it in the last message so I would refer you back there.

-You may say, “I don't like that idea.” That's your prerogative, but I don't think it's wise because the issue is actually not “What do we like?” but “What is true.”

-Some people say I like or believe in Jesus, but I don't believe parts of the Bible, or I think that the Bible is wrong about homosexuality or sex outside of marriage being wrong, or I believe in Jesus but I'm going to live how I want to. You don't have those options. Jesus is Lord over all. You can reject Him or surrender to Him, but you cannot dictate the terms of the relationship.

2. We have an ongoing, moral obligation to love everyone (v.8).

-Everyone is our neighbor so everyone means everyone. There are only people made in God's image and not classes or categories of people.

-How we are to define identity and how it relates to this question

-Relate it to the question of race and homosexuality

-Tim Gill getting death threats and having Christians say terrible things to him and how this is wrong and missing the point

-Do you have to agree with someone and/or affirm their lifestyle in order to love them?

1. No. David Robinson writes in Love Speech, “If your child was a drug addict and a murderer, could you still love him fully even though you do not accept his lifestyle? Of course, you could. Your love for your child is unconditional; it is not based on your child’s actions. If your child is a drug addict and a murderer, he is doing things that are morally wrong and therefore harmful to him and others. Not only can you love your child and reject his lifestyle, but you *ought* to love him and you *ought* to reject his lifestyle. To *accept* a lifestyle that harms your child is not loving.

2. Refer to examples about relationships from earlier

3. How it cuts both ways with people disagreeing with our viewpoint and lifestyle, which leads us back to who’s right

Part of loving people is speaking the truth (Ephesians 4:15).

David Robinson: “Let me make this very clear. You are not doing anyone a favor by being silent, or by ‘going with the flow,’ or by ‘picking your battles.’... You are not helping those around you by pretending to believe a lie and encouraging them, by your silence, to believe the lie themselves. Neither are you helping yourself by being dishonest with yourself and not standing up for the truth, whether it is popular to do so or not... Speak up for what is right, no matter how others may treat you. But speak in love. Respect people. Show people that the reason you speak is not to condemn and to shame others, but to help others and to show love. It is the friend helping the friend out of the way of the oncoming bus. Be that friend, do not be the bus.”

3. Love is expressed by righteous actions so we love people by treating them in a godly manner (v.9).

-Love is an obedient, godly action.

-The Law reveals our sinfulness and need for a Savior. This is an objective standard that shows we’re wrong.

-We must remember that we are to lovingly practice restorative discipline in the church. We are not to expect non-Christians to act like Christians.

4. Love does no harm so anything that harms someone else is unloving and wrong (v.10).

So, what is right and wrong when it comes to sexuality and gender and how do these verses apply? We are commanded to love everyone, but love is truly expressed by

how we treat people so when we do something wrong it is harmful, and therefore, unloving, even if the intent is to be loving.

Sexuality:

C.S. Lewis wrote in Mere Christianity, “The Christian rule is either marriage, with complete faithfulness to your partner, or else total abstinence.”

Our statement of faith: “We believe that sexual intimacy should only occur within a marriage relationship as described above. We believe that any sexual intimacy occurring outside of this context is sinful and harmful. This includes, but is not limited to, fornication, pornography, incest, adultery, homosexual sexual intimacy, bisexual sexual intimacy, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, polyandry and any other sexual activity other than sexual intimacy between a man and a woman who are exclusively married to one another for as long as they both shall live.”

David Robinson writes, “When a person intentionally engages in sexual relationships outside of marriage, he is always treating his sexual partner as a *thing*, as an *object* to be used for his own personal pleasure. If he truly desired the best for the other person, he would not put the cart before the horse. He would make sure that he had *given* the level of commitment that is proper to a sexual relationship before he *took* the other person’s body in sexual activity. We can all see how much damage fornication and a general lack of commitment has caused by the high number of fatherless homes in this world, and the resulting harm often suffered by the children in these homes.”

Gender: (Jesus quoted and reaffirmed in Mathew 19:4)

Statement of faith: “We believe that God created humans as male and female. We believe that gender is a wonderful and holy gift. We believe that disagreement with one’s gender or attempts to change one’s gender, live consistently with a gender opposite to the one a person is born with, or to live as though one did not have a specific gender, is sinful and harmful. We believe that protecting the genders of our children and ourselves is the duty of every believer in Jesus Christ.”

Homosexuality

What about when someone says they are a different gender than what their biology says? What about when someone says that a homosexual relationship is right because they love each other? Or another type of relationship outside of biblical marriage? This is what the Bible says. What if I don’t believe the Bible? Let’s think about the natural Law and love.

David Robinson: “When the Natural Law says ‘do not harm’ it means do no wrong, do no evil, do nothing against the natural order, *do nothing unnatural*.”

1. These relationships are immoral because they are unnatural.

David Robinson: “It is obvious, to everyone who is honest, that male and female bodies are designed for sexual intercourse between opposite genders. The sexual organs literally fit together naturally.”

“At the beginning of this book I included the story of The Emperor’s New Clothes.

Imagine that little boy in that story being introduced to the concept of heterosexual and homosexual sex. He would blurt out what was obvious to everyone who is honest.

“Homosexual sex doesn’t make sense.” This is obvious and true. If not for the pressure put on people to accept this behavior, everyone else would say the same thing. Ask yourself these questions: If a man was supposed to have sex with other men, why would he be born with a body obviously designed to have sex with a woman? Why would he be given a body capable of producing children through heterosexual sex? The same questions apply to homosexual women. Homosexual sexual activity is clearly a perversion. It goes against the clear design of the human body.”

2. These relationships are immoral because they are harmful.

“I am a nurse so I understand why homosexuality is wrong anatomically. There is no anatomic union between a man and a man or a woman and a woman. There are no parts that healthily fit in either sexual union. A woman and a woman do not fit together. In the sexual act, they stay outside of any union or find devices to simulate the natural sexual act between a man and a woman. A man and a man do the same thing. They simulate the union of man and women [*sic*] by having a sexual act in an area of the body that is very unclean, the colon. Both lesbians and homosexual men are artificially copying the natural sexual union of a man and a woman.”

“Sex has consequences. The consequences of sexual activity are both physical and emotional. Some of the physical consequences of sex can be pregnancy and sound health, as well as disease and decreased health. Some of the emotional consequences of sexual activity can be joy, emotional fulfillment and increased feelings of well-being, as well as depression, shame, guilt, anger, and feelings of being used.

As I wrote earlier, even within the context of male-female sexual activity, there are perversions (rape, incest, fornication, adultery). However, there is a context where none of the negative physical and emotional consequences of sexual activity necessarily exist. Notice I did not state that the negative consequences never exist. I said they do not *necessarily* exist. If a man and a woman abstain from sexual activity until they have entered a monogamous, lifelong commitment to one another in marriage, disease is extremely unlikely to result. Shame, guilt, anger, and feelings of being used are also

unlikely to result, and a pregnancy is far less likely to result in a single parent raising a child. In fact, physical and emotional well-being are most likely to occur in a relationship of this type.” Homosexuality and these other sins are obviously different and do not live up to biblical marriage.

3. These relationships are immoral because they do moral and spiritual harm.

4. Therefore, immoral sexual activity is not truly an expression of love even though there may be genuine feelings of love for the other person.

What about when people say that homosexuality is natural, that people are born that way so it's an identity that can't be helped? It is a choice and not an identity. You don't have to identify as something just because you think or even do something. It is a product of the fall.

David Robinson: “I sometimes have a strong desire to lie in order to cover up some wrong thing I have done. However, I do not choose to identify myself as a liar. In fact, I try not to lie because I have other thoughts and feelings that make me want to do what is morally right. People who have homosexual thoughts and feelings are not homosexuals in their *essence*, it is not who they *are* in any sense that necessarily *must* make up their identity.....

The fact that you may have homosexual thoughts and desires does not mean that you must identify yourself as a homosexual. Even less does it mean that you must engage in homosexual sex. If homosexuality is unnatural, harmful, and therefore morally wrong, you should work to battle against any other thoughts and feelings that make you want to do immoral things.

Please pay attention here. There is *nothing* morally wrong with having thoughts and feelings that make you want to do what is unnatural and immoral. I myself, and all other people, have thoughts and feelings that make us want to do what is unnatural and immoral. If you have homosexual thoughts and feelings, let go of any shame. For those of you who do not have homosexual thoughts and feelings, STOP trying to shame those who do. You are not any better than the person who has these thoughts and feelings. You would not want others to shame you for your personal, immoral thoughts and feelings.”
(Use alcoholism as an example and apply to other types of sin)

Application to non-Christians

Romans 1:18-32 and the condition of our hearts and the need to surrender to Christ

In an interview popular blogger Jen Hatmaker was asked,

"Do you think an LGBT relationship can be holy?" Hatmaker replied: "I do. And my views here are tender. This is a very nuanced conversation, and it's hard to nail down in one sitting. I've seen too much pain and rejection at the intersection of the gay community and the church. Every believer that witnesses that much overwhelming sorrow should be tender enough to do some hard work here."

But former lesbian Rosaria Butterfield reproved Hatmaker for this "tenderness" that leaves people in sin. Butterfield wrote:

"If this were 1999—the year that I was converted and walked away from the woman and lesbian community I loved—instead of 2016, Jen Hatmaker's words about the holiness of LGBT relationships would have flooded into my world like a balm of Gilead ... [I would have thought], Yes, I can have Jesus and my girlfriend. Yes, I can flourish both in my tenured academic discipline (queer theory and English literature and culture) and in my church ...

Maybe I wouldn't need to lose everything to have Jesus. Maybe the gospel wouldn't ruin me while I waited, waited, waited for the Lord to build me back up after he convicted me of my sin, and I suffered the consequences ... Today, I hear Jen's words ... and a thin trickle of sweat creeps down my back. If I were still in the thick of the battle over the indwelling sin of lesbian desire, Jen's words would have put a millstone around my neck.

To be clear, I was not converted out of homosexuality. I was converted out of unbelief. I didn't swap out a lifestyle. I died to a life I loved. Conversion to Christ made me face the question squarely: did my lesbianism reflect who I am (which is what I believed in 1999), or did my lesbianism distort who I am through the fall of Adam? I learned through conversion that when something feels right and good and real and necessary—but stands against God's Word—this reveals the particular way Adam's sin marks my life. Our sin natures deceive us."

"But when I came to Christ, I experienced what nineteenth-century Scottish theologian Thomas Chalmers called "the expulsive power of a new affection." At the time of my conversion, my lesbian identity and feelings did not vanish. As my union with Christ grew, the sanctification that it birthed put a wedge between my old self and my new one. In time, this contradiction exploded, and I was able to claim identity in Christ alone."

Cancel culture and Jesus [Colossians 2:13-14]

Jesus cancels our sin, but He doesn't cancel us. In fact, He redeems us, transforms us, makes us new. He makes us who God created us to be. But as she says, it's a painful process as we daily die to ourselves. Will you trust Jesus and surrender to Him today? We're all sinners. We all need Him. Let Him make you alive. Publicly confess Him through baptism. Give your life completely to Him.