
The Biblical Analysis Of Same-sex Marriage

Introduction

In order to effectively understand the current societal impact, perspectives, and ethical dilemma of same-sex marriage in light of Christian ethics and varying theologies, seeking truth will be used for identifying, analyzing, and providing insight for this dilemma through ethical, theological, and case study analysis. In relation to varying cultural dynamics and the theological frameworks of institutionally based religion, this paper serves as a reflection of the ethical implications of the Church's formal policies and informal postures toward same-sex marriage. Today marriage is commonly defined as a contractual union between a man and a woman that "brings adults together into committed sexual and domestic relationships in order to regulate sexuality and provide for the needs of daily life". Because Scripture only references relationships between males and females, one can argue that the text only sanctions heterosexual unions. In Matthew 19 Jesus underscores this notion, remarking: "Haven't you read...that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'...for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh"? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." From this passage, the Religious Right infers matrimony is the union of one man and one woman, who form a "new natural family," which leads to "the procreation of offspring. There are a few flaws worth noting in this viewpoint. First, it presumes Adam and Eve's union not only is but also exemplifies marriage. This perspective also relies on the assumption that because God fosters a relationship between the first man and woman, monogamy is ideal.

Defining a proper response towards same-sex marriage has polarized Christians as they struggle between a conservative (opposing) and liberal (affirmative) extreme. The conservative response, based in the viewpoint that Biblical principles regard same-sex marriage as sinful, tends to explicitly reject the homosexual individual, risking future relationship growth and evangelistic opportunity, often engendering spiritual arrogance or hypocrisy. On the other hand, a liberal reaction, based in the point of view that Biblical principles regard same-sex marriage as not sinful endorses the choices of the individual, risking a compromise of historically held beliefs of sin, accusations of succumbing to societal pressures, and future spiritual/personal growth. The most important distinction within the debate(s) between same-sex marriage and Christianity are the ethical frameworks that shape the classifications of ethics and morals. An ethical dilemma arises when an agent has a conflict between one or more ethical frameworks in which they have moral reasoning behind doing each of two or more actions, but doing both would not be possible. The dilemma, being whether or not it is ethical for Christians and their institutions to hold formal policies and informal sentiments against same-sex marriage, is evaluated from a deontological (or principle-based) lens. In this dilemma, Christians and their institutions are "condemned to moral failure; no matter what they do, they will do something wrong.

Why I chose the subject

I chose the Biblical Analysis of same-sex Marriage, I believe this is necessary because we have lots of issues going on with lots of misunderstandings on God's original purpose of marriage. Our Creator established rules governing marriage long before governments began

regulating the institution. Thus, God intended marriage to be a permanent, intimate bond between a man and a woman. Men and women are designed to complement each other so they may be capable of satisfying each other's emotional and sexual needs and of providing children. The main ancient objection to male-male sexual activity was that one partner had to take the 'woman's role' of being penetrated. In a patriarchal society, to be masculine was to be the active partner, whereas to be passive was deemed feminine and shameful.

Principle-based Ethics and Virtue Theory

A deontological framework of ethics is the essential dimension to the same-sex marriage debate because Scripture is given supreme authority in Christianity. Principle-based Ethics is based on moral authority defined by a set of moral obligations that are fundamentally necessary. The Christian strand of deontological ethics falls into the category of divine command theory, which sources its standards of moral obligations based on the commands of God. The problem between same-sex marriage and Christianity lies within the seemingly conflicting commands of God to hold true to the Biblical tradition of marriage and Jesus' commands to front love toward others and leave judgment to God. Virtue Theory is based on, emphasizes the ethics of character, not moral obligation, and is consistent with the biblical emphasis on emulating the character of Christ. Maintain that ethics cannot be understood apart from the narrative of the life of Jesus and the broader story of his redemption of humankind making it essential to understand Jesus and humanity in context.

The Overall Narrative of Creator and Creation

The debate begins in the Genesis Creation Narrative, where humanity's divine image bearing nature, condemnation, and structure of marriage gain their foundation. God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve, right? In the beginning, God created. He created the land and the sky, the plants and the animals, and Mankind. Humanity was provided for and they walked with God in the Garden of Eden. God created man and woman and gave them the responsibility to steward the earth, to be fruitful, and to multiply. Image of God. Humanity as creation, in its function and orientation, are the main subjects of debate within the principle-based controversy revolving around same-sex marriage because the non-affirming state that homosexual individuals operate outside of God's will.

Husband-Wife structures before the fall of man. The non-affirming maintain that same-sex marriage is unholy because of the marriage structures defined in the Creation Narrative. The text shows that only a helper that is of the same created nature and essence would be suitable for man because sex between a man and his wife is regarded here as reflecting the essence of the connection God created for men and women. The orthodox view of marriage restricts its structure to the biological, procreative process of a male and a female, however, the husband and wife structure was necessary because humanity's survival was dependent upon male and female specific roles. In regards to this identification, it is concluded that the male-female marriage structure is a result of cultural and historical necessity, not deontological principle.

The affirming side of the same-sex marriage debate argues that the Church has not been consistent with its views and actions toward sin. The consummation of marriage, and creation of Eve, reflects that man/Adam is incomplete without a companion. The affirming maintain that the orthodox definition of marriage clearly restricts marriage and sex to consented intercourse, is

male-female oriented based on cultural need, and prohibits divorce, fornication, and the marriage of believers outside of the Church. The non-affirming side of the same-sex marriage debate does not treat heterosexual marriage related sins such as divorce and adultery with the same criticality while holding to an orthodox view of marriage. The union in this story is not blessed by God, given equal dominion over the earth, nor encouraged to procreate. In fact, the final line celebrates unabashed nudity. Man and woman are united as one flesh but not necessarily to produce offspring nor for any specified length of time. While it may seem obvious that “becoming one flesh” indicates lifelong monogamy, it could just as easily be promoting impassioned intercourse between two individuals. Male and female could come together to copulate and then each join with other males and females. This stance is supported by the fact that procreation and familial bonding are only mentioned in this story as punishment for disobeying God.

Husband-Wife Structures After The Fall of Man

The non-affirming side to the debate argues that same-sex marriage is an abomination of the biblical institution of marriage, however humanity, in its sinful form, is already an abomination to God’s perfect will. The text does not make it clear whether or not the need for a human companion is limited to heterosexual relationships except in sexual functionality. However, as a result of the fall, the nature of childbearing would change. Upon eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve realize that they are naked and cover themselves with fig leaves. The fig, being a symbol of fertility, identifies that by eating the forbidden fruit Adam and Eve “have set in motion their future role as parents and as cultivators of fruit trees and grain suggesting that childbearing and parenting may have not been originally part of their intended role or function. A traditional view of marriage maintains that same-sex marriage is sinful because of the inability of same-sex couples to bear children. Among the various advances in science, some claim that it is now possible for two same-sex individuals to produce children. However, without arguing the nature of these advances and the additional nuances that could be added to the argument, it is important to continue to process this argument from the divine command theory of ethics that holds various calls for humanity.

Mankind, created in the image of God and given the responsibility to steward God’s creation on his behalf, was given the right to exercise judgment in their stewardship over creation through conscience, self-awareness, and discernment. As long as humanity was performing these duties. in response to their image bearing nature, they were within the will of God. However, these judgment tools were to be used within the context of stewarding creation, and not in order to condemn; for condemnatory judgment was reserved to God alone because in human hands it would lead to mankind’s fall from God’s will. When Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they gained a conscience, self-awareness, and discernment to judge beyond their intended nature. If sin is any action or inaction marked as outside of the will of God, then sin entered the world as they began to condemn each other’s bodies in shame. Mankind using the wisdom of God to condemn became an abomination of God’s intended nature.

In addition to stewarding the earth with a righteous range of judgment, God’s intended purpose for mankind was to remain faithful in marriage to one’s spousal companion. Their sex, becoming one flesh, spiritually and/or sexually/physically were representative of their wholeness and very good nature. Without bearing children mankind is operating outside the will of God and

ultimately living in sin leaving a fundamental issue for the affirming side: Same-sex couples cannot currently produce children naturally. From a deontological perspective, it can be concluded that same-sex marriage is unethical if same-sex couples cannot bear children even if they maintain a faithful and committed relationship.

The same-sex marriage predicament continues with the continued narrative of God through Jesus Christ's life and teachings. The broken relationship structures of humanity remained from The Fall of Man as God's people yearned for someone who would redeem the nature that God intended for humanity. To usher the world back to its intended nature, God sent his Son. The same-sex marriage debate will be analyzed next to an analysis of the overall person of Jesus through his messianic identity, ethically charged miracles, and Kingdom of God teachings.

Not one person has come to Jesus and left without being challenged. His life and teachings challenged every perspective, in one-way or another and some more than others, because he came to proclaim the intended reality of God in a broken world. Jesus challenges both affirming and non-affirming sides to the same-sex marriage dilemma by embodying and proclaiming the just and loving will of God.

As discussed throughout, the Religious Right wields the Bible to challenge the validity and legality of homosexual relationships. Although evidence suggests society in ancient times was familiar with homosexuality, the Bible does not explicitly prohibit it. Rather, a thorough review of the contentious verses reveals that what the Bible actually proscribes is a specific sexual act that mostly pertains to men. In addition, the sinful act may really only be forbidden within certain circumstances. When read in context, and in the original languages, it is clear the Bible does not patently condemn homosexuality, and especially not in the manner that sexual orientation is understood today. Moreover, based on the biblical teachings regarding marriage, it is difficult to argue that the Bible would not sanction those same-sex marriages that are committed, fulfilling, long-lasting relationships.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is a radical demonstration of faith for Christians and their institutions to repent of the sins of same-sex marriage as their own. Whether or not it can be proven that the Church has been the primary source of fear and shame for gay and lesbian individuals to approach the Throne of Grace, it is beyond question that the Church has segregated the gay and lesbian community because of their sins. In order to pioneer action and to represent God in Christ, Christian institutions, as righteous imitators of Christ, must step into full view bearing the sins of others as their own, providing an environment of unconditional positive regard, and diligently cultivate their relationships in faith that the Holy Spirit alone will convict and lead to repentance. The most ethical approach to same-sex marriage, from both a Christian deontological and virtue theory based framework of ethics, necessitates the affirmative posture towards same-sex marriage that embodies the following: Christians and their institutions must be agents of social transformation and healing within formal policies and informal sentiments, must engage in the experience of the gay and lesbian community building relationships of unconditional care and compassion, must honor the immutable commands of God the Father to be fruitful, to multiply, and remain faithful in marriage, and must follow the life and teachings of Jesus Christ to be most critical of one's own sins taking a posture of humility and sacrifice in order to embody and proclaim the Kingdom of God.

As Christians, it is our duty to fulfill each command of God. It is difficult to reconcile what appear to be differences and contradictions in theology and Scripture. However, God and His Living Word do not contradict each other. The apparent difficulty within the text lies within our own disparity to leave what is comfortable in order to love each other thoroughly and unconditionally. It is most ethical for us, as Christians, to kneel before the Throne of Grace with full knowledge that we may have been wrong in our analysis of same-sex marriage for it is more important to be in relationship than to be right. However, Jesus Christ has made it abundantly clear that judgment is God's alone and that we are called to revolutionary, transformative love. God has called His people to lives of seemingly upside-down proportions that necessitate wholehearted presence, sacrificial service, and unmistakable joy.

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