A Biblical Analysis And Response Same-Sex Marriage

Introduction

On numerous occasions in time past and now, the accuracy and infallibility of the Christian Bible is one thing that has come under much scrutiny, even from within the church. This notwithstanding, the truths and principles expounded therein are widely accepted and acknowledged by the world at large; one of which is the institution of marriage. The scriptural perspective of marriage has been commonly practiced and understood; with nearly all marriages in the world modelled after it. It is viewed as an ordinance instituted by God Himself, and between people of the opposite sex. It forms the basic fabric of the community – family. However, there has been ceaseless waves of attacks that have risen against the God-ordained institution of marriage throughout ancient and recent times. Most of these attacks disappear with time, whilst others do not; one of such being same-sex marriage. In recent times, same-sex marriage has become a major world concern as it gains ground in most countries. Acceptance of this phenomenon by states and countries has weakened marriages. Of this phenomenon, Timothy J Dailey writes; “The assault on marriage and the family has been carried on in a number of fronts: the courts, the world of academia, and the Hollywood entertainment industry. Yet the weakening of the institution of marriage by the push to normalize adultery, divorce, and homosexuality has also proceeded in a cultural sphere where many would least expect it—in the nation’s religious institutions.”1

This work, therefore, will seek to tackle the issue of same-sex marriage and all its accompanying theories by comparing it to scripture. Also, it will focus on a roadmap that will aid in overcoming the onslaught of same-sex marriage as evidenced in the Christian Bible.

Problem Analysis

First off, it is imperative to describe the scope and foundation for this work by having a working definition of what marriage is, and is not. Marriage is ordained by God to be between a man and a woman. According to Walter A Ellwell, “marriage is an intimate and complementing union between a man and a woman in which the two become one physically, in the whole of life.”2 This definition sits well with that of the first mention of marriage in scripture. Genesis 2:24 states, “therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.”3 The Greek word translated as wife is “ishshah”, which stands simply for a woman. It occurs 674 times throughout the whole Bible.4 This goes a long way to confirm that the originally intended purpose of God for the institution of marriage is between one man and one woman. Secondly, “marriage is the lifetime union of a man and a woman, primarily for the purpose of building a family and providing a stable environment for that family.”5 It is the chief means by which culture maintains heterosexuality as a social identity and keeps in line with the ordinance of God. It is the social essence of heterosexuality. In consequence, on the plane of symbols and identities, if one did not marry, one would not be fully heterosexual. On the other hand, if others were allowed to get married, one wouldn’t be fully heterosexual either. Moving away from the biblical stance and parameters set for marriage will be catastrophic, as it threatens the very foundations of society and the world at large. It will mean that the means by which procreation is to be achieved will be totally abandoned; bringing the human generation to

an abrupt end. Also, such a move devalues heterosexual marriages. In their book on same-sex marriage, R. M Baird and S. E Rosenbaum argue that, “It (same-sex) demeans the institution. The institution of marriage is trivialized by same-sex marriage.”6

Moreover, any such shift leads to the issue of homosexuality. And as such, same-sex cannot be fully analyzed without taking a look at homosexuality and sexual orientation. Most proponents of the idea refute the claim that scripture categorically speaks against the idea of homosexuality. But, is that really true? What does scripture say in regard to homosexuality? While the Bible does not explicitly mention gay marriage/same-sex marriage, it does address homosexuality. In fact, it is condemned as an immoral and unnatural sin. Accoding to Leviticus 18:22, homosexuality is an abomination. Also, 1 Corinthians 6:9 categorically lists homosexuals as part of those who would not inherit the kingdom of God. Proponents of same-sex marriage will back their position with the claim of being born that way. Once again scripture speaks against it, with Romans 1:26-27 tagging it as shameful, unnatural, lustful, and indecent. Concerning this Timothy J Dailey writes, “rather than being a divine “gift” that needs to be celebrated, homosexuality is unambiguously found wanting by Scripture and tradition. While a minority of voices may say otherwise, they do not represent the broad consensus shared by Christians in Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant communities throughout history.”7 Seeing that homosexuality is condemned by the Bible, any attempt to marry such persons becomes a sin in itself.

Addressing the Problem

Although same-sex is not to be condoned by Christians, we are commanded to love every one equally – irrespective of their sexual orientation. As stated by in Rom. 13:8, we are to owe no man anything in exception of love. But, what would loving a homosexual person mean? Is it ever possible to love without condoning their sexual orientation? The biblical answer to all these is yes. Romans 12:9 suggests that genuine love hates evil and holds fast to that which is good. Also, Ephesians 4:15 makes mention of speaking the truth in love. It remains to be seen then, that the command to love all equally doesn’t mean total acceptance of that which is known to be wrong and a sin. In the words of E. W Muehl, “one of the most popular errors in the realm of Christian ethics has been the effort to make love an omnipotent spiritual quality which has the power to sanctify anything that is done in its name.”8

Apart from the universal Christian church, the basic family unit must assume the responsibility of educating their children on issues concerning sexual orientation and the biblical stance concerning the same. Of this principle, the Bible speaks thus, “train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”9 When a child is thought sound biblical truth from infancy, it becomes increasingly difficult to unlearn even as they grow into maturity. It affords the child answers when confronted with such issues concerning same-sex away from home.

Moreover, it remains the duty of a parent to know their children. When this is properly done, it safeguards the child from picking up strange habits which are insidious in nature. The parent gets to know when their child needs what help and move swiftly to solve it. Discipleship remains the most effective way of dealing with people trapped in homosexuality or same-sex attraction. This is a redemptive approach which centers around teaching, encouraging and holding accountable such persons to develop intimacy with Christ. Notably, it doesn't appear to make a

difference what the specific struggle is in an individual's life— regardless of whether it be homosexuality, ravenousness, drug addiction, impulsive betting or shopping, liquor abuse, sexual enslavement, or some other stronghold—the only way out still remains intimacy with Christ.

Genuine discipleship is diligent work. Furthermore, God furnishes us with the energy needed to carry it out. According to the Apostle Paul, “for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control.”10 It takes huge self-restraint to walk in the Spirit rather than in our own wisdom, to rely upon God's quality rather than our own. The real battle remains in the mind. It is in this regard that the Apostle Paul charges the Colossian church to set their minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (Col. 3:2)

Implementation Timeline

Homosexuality, like any other stronghold, can be broken when the following steps are followed. To start with, a conscious effort must be made to stop the sinful habits and behavioral patterns of homosexuality. It is worthy to note anyway that God's help will be needed all throughout this process. This is because, a problem cannot be solved on the same level it was created, it must be moved to a higher realm to receive solution. A problem can’t be worked on, when it has total control.

Secondly, work on your identity in Christ as revealed by scripture. There is the need for the mind to be filled with good and healthy thoughts that reflect what the Bible confirms to be our true identity. To this, scripture confirms, “finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”11 Just as people learning to identify counterfeit money examine real currency so they can spot the fakes, strugglers needs to fill their mind with God's Word so they can enter into their true identity as a beloved, valuable child of God. Allow your mind to be filled with praise, worship and Scripture instead of obsessing over the aching and longing for the unhealthy and sinful behavior.

Next is to accept that it feels bad. When we give up on satisfying our needs in our own ways, we start experiencing the emotional pain that was previously shielded by our strongholds. We know we are at that very point where God can make the biggest difference in our lives when it feels really bad. Take an introspective look and ascertain your needs and what you long for. Go to Jesus and allow Him meet your deepest heart-needs. Let Him direct you, leading you to get your divinely-designed needs for relationship with other people met in godly ways. It is at this point that the healing occurs.

Unfortunately, many people have tried to change their homosexuality by themselves and have got hurt in the process. This owes largely to the fact that most families and church organizations fail to recognize their roles in helping. Even those who do, make it worse by proposing human systems that give only but a brief moment of relief. At the point when church or individual endeavors are basically gone for symptom removal or social change, they totally come up short and likely harm those they serve. We may incidentally create a system of redemption that is focused more in experiential management of sin instead of instructing individuals to rest in the full and complete work of Jesus Christ.

The role of the church then, is to avail itself as an entity to all who are willing to change from the sinful habit of engaging in same-sex relationships, teach them the truth and be prepared to disciple them to maturity if need be. Whilst waiting for this opportunity, it is expedient that we remain prayerful so as to be readied when the occasion happens that these people come to us as a church. This is summed up beautifully in the book of James thus, “My brethren, if any one among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”12 The same applies to individuals as well. We must also be ready as individuals to help when the need arises.

Conclusion

The basic cause of a homosexual orientation isn't genetics or choice; it's a wrong response to being hurt. It's about protecting oneself and trying to get legitimate needs met in ways God never intended. True change can only happen with the discipline of submitting to God, allowing Him to expose the deep hurts and needs of one's heart, which means facing horrible pain, and inviting Him to bring healing to those wounded places. That's why intimacy with Christ is the answer. A wise friend observed that homosexuality is the fruit of sinful ways of dealing with pain-sinful because they cut us off from the One who can heal and meet our needs, sinful because they place us at the center of our universe and we don't belong there. Jesus does. It remains evident that real change is hard and it costs a great deal because it requires strong motivation, hard work, and perseverance. But hundreds of former homosexuals have found a large degree of change, attaining abstinence from homosexual behaviors, lessening of homosexual temptations, strengthening their sense of masculine or feminine identity, correcting distorted styles of relating with members of the same and opposite gender. Some former homosexuals marry and some don't, but marriage is not the measuring stick; spiritual growth and obedience are.

Bibliography

1. Baird, R.M., and S.E. Rosenbaum. Same-Sex Marriage: The Moral and Legal Debate. Contemporary issues. Prometheus Books, 1997. https://books.google.com.gh/books?id=DTNHAAAAMAAJ.
2. Dailey, Timothy J. The Bible, the Church and Homosexuality. Washington, DC: Family Research Council, 2004.
3. Elwell, Walter A. “Marriage.” Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Theology Online. Accessed February 16, 2019. https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/marriage.html.
4. Houdman, S. Michael. “What Does the Bible Say About Gay Marriage / Same Sex Marriage?” Got Questions.org. Accessed February 16, 2019. https://www.gotquestions.org/gay-marriage.html.
5. Muehl, William, “Some Words of Caution,” in Homosexuality and Ethics, ed. Edward Batchelor Jr. (New York: Pilgrim, 1980) OSIS Bible Tool. “The Bible.” Accessed February 16, 2019. http://crosswire.org/study/wordsearchresults.jsp?mod=NASB&searchTerm=lemma:H802&colorKey=802&colorMorph=.
6. https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/marriage.html
7. https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/marriage.html
8. https://www.gotquestions.org/gay-marriage.html

9. https://www.gotquestions.org/gay-marriage.html
10. http://crosswire.org/study/wordsearchresults.jsp?mod=NASB&searchTerm=lemma:H802&colorKey=802&colorMorph=
11. http://crosswire.org/study/wordsearchresults.jsp?mod=NASB&searchTerm=lemma:H802&colorKey=802&colorMorph=