

Silverdale Baptist Church & Homosexuality

June 10, 2012, as part of his series "Collision: When My World & Truth Collide," Pastor Tony gave a message on "The Truth about Homosexuality." To hear the sermon, [click here](#). Below are his responses to questions that were sent in after the message.

What are your thoughts about voting gay rights? I have a friend that believes that it's wrong to impose my beliefs on other people by voting based on my beliefs.

As Christians we are not just Christians on Sunday and in the church building. We are to live out our Christian faith in every area of our lives. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others" (Matthew 5:14-16, NIV 1984). Our Christian faith should influence the way that we live at home. It should also affect the way that we work in our businesses. But we are also citizens of a country, and we are to live our lives in such a way that our Christian faith influences the culture and the country we live in. Jesus said to "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21, NASB).

God said that we should have concern for government leaders because their leadership affects our society and our lives as well. Paul told Timothy, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." (1 Timothy 2:1-2, KJV)

In the United States we have a privilege that was not known in the Bible. We have the privilege to choose our leaders and many times even vote on our laws. It only makes sense that we as Christians would vote our morals at the ballot box. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Jay put it this way, "Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers." (October 12, 1816. The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay).

So let me be specific about homosexual issues. I do not approve of homosexual marriage. Marriage is always described in the Scriptures as being between a male and a female. Jesus said, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?" (Matthew 19:4-5, ESV) Therefore, I oppose homosexual marriage. And Silverdale Baptist Church and its pastors will never conduct or allow any homosexual marriages to be held in our church facilities.

Do I believe that homosexuals need to be discriminated against? Not at all. No more than if a person was a heterosexual who was living with someone. Would we discriminate against that person? Most likely we would not. Religious institutions and other businesses can have moral codes of ethics, and they should be free to hire based on those codes of ethics. But by and large, there should be no discriminated difference between a homosexual and a heterosexual who is living in sin.

What about adoption? I would oppose homosexual adoption just like I would oppose giving an adopted child to a heterosexual couple who is not married. In both situations, the parents would be setting an example that is contrary to the word of God. Based on statistical studies, children who are raised by homosexual couples are more likely to explore same-sex behavior than children who are raised by

heterosexual couples. Our morals really are caught more than they are taught.

A family member is homosexual. Do we invite him with his boyfriend into our home for holidays, dinners, etc.?

Let me answer this question as though you were talking about a family member who is living with someone of the opposite sex. Sex outside of marriage is just as sinful as homosexuality. How would you respond to that person and their partner? Most likely you would allow them to be part of most of your family functions, but you would not allow them to express their sinful behavior and outward affection in your presence or in your home. If they were spending the night, you would make them sleep in separate rooms. I would extend those same boundaries and guidelines to a homosexual family member. Look at how Jesus tells us to respond in love to those that we oppose in Matthew 5:43: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" (Matthew 5:43-47, ESV)

We are called to love people the same way God does. If we only love people who are just like us then we are no better than the lost. But God shows mercy to the righteous and the unrighteous, and so must we. We show them love, but we must always set boundaries in our home. You just have to determine what those boundaries are and be consistent. If you set boundaries toward homosexuals, then those same boundaries need to be set up toward heterosexuals who are in sin as well.

Are we supposed to accept the belief that homosexuals are destined to celibacy? Aren't they supposed to accept a lifestyle they feel will bring them joy? How is it that I am able to have a happy relationship merely because I am heterosexual? But they are not allowed to have a happy homosexual relationship.

I believe that this question is in reference to this statement I made about the change of a homosexual. I said that "God is not necessarily calling you to a heterosexual lifestyle but he is calling you to holiness." The reason I made that statement is twofold.

First, I did not want to give unrealistic expectations to those who are struggling with homosexuality. I did not want to paint the picture that all homosexuals who desire to change will suddenly have heterosexual attraction, and that they will one day get married and have children like the example of Dennis Jernigan that I gave. The reality is that not all homosexuals who desire to change will then enter into a heterosexual lifestyle. Exodus International (a large Christian ministry that helps homosexuals change) has found the following statistics from people who have gone through their program: 23% convert to a heterosexual lifestyle and 30% change into a chastity lifestyle. Because of this statistic I did not want to paint a picture that it would be easy for a homosexual to simply change into a heterosexual. It is not easy.

The second reason why I made this statement was because I wanted to make sure that we are all called to holiness. Your question implies that if I follow God and his holy demands on my life then I will have less joy and happiness in my life, that living a life of chastity and celibacy is less joyful than living a homosexual life. I would disagree with that statement. God's standards always lead us to the most joyful

life possible. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6, NASB). A wrong philosophy of our age is to think that God's commandments and limitations take away our joy. The truth is God's commandments, when followed, produce the greatest joy possible. Let me give you an example. Early in my marriage, we had some very rough years. A thought came to my mind that I should dump the relationship and leave because God would not want me unhappy in this relationship. But I knew to abandon my wife would be against the Scriptures so I pursued holiness rather than my temporary happiness and today my marriage is very happy and joyful. Following God's commands lead to the greatest joy of our life - long term. A homosexual who chooses to follow Christ will find his greatest joy. That may mean they become a heterosexual or it may simply mean that they live as a single person with other healthy, non-sexual relationships. And if they do, their single life will bring greater joy than the homosexual lifestyle would. In fact, God promises special blessings on those people who choose a chaste and celibate lifestyle. "For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs ... who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give in my house ... a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off" (Isa. 56:4-5, ESV).

Again my main point is to say that choosing holiness leads to the greatest happiness. Choosing the temporary lust of the flesh and giving in to homosexuality or any other sexual sin will ultimately lead to a loss of joy and a distance in our relationship with God.

More information and/or help for anyone struggling with homosexuality can be found at www.exodusinternational.org and www.harvestusa.org.