

Confessing Marriage, Confessing Christ

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Check out the newspapers and magazines. Surf the web. Gay marriage is the hot topic of our rapidly-changing culture. Many young people view marriage equality as the civil rights issue of our time. Others think it's all about love. And truth be told, many Christians feel sheepish. Almost all of us have friends and relatives who struggle with homosexuality, and we love them dearly. Living together is common among us, and our own divorce rates are high. Who are we to talk? And who wants to be labeled a hater or called a bigot?

But speak we must. In midst of confusion, we cling to God's Word. The Bible is clear. Homosexuality is a sin. Moses warns us against it (Lev. 20:13) as does St. Paul (Rom. 1:18–32). And indeed, sin has consequences (1 Cor. 6:9–11). But then, is homosexuality worse than any other sin? Those who become angry are liable to judgment, and those who lust commit adultery in their hearts (Matt. 5:21–30). At its root, sin is sin, and one common sin infects us all. Before the judgment throne, none of us has a leg to stand on. Christ alone is our defense.

But gay marriage poses a special challenge. Vice is now labeled virtue, and sin itself is celebrated. In the face of societal pressure, some Christians are cowed into silence. Other are tempted to embrace what God forbids. But no man can serve two masters. By denying true marriage, we begin to deny Christ Himself. A string is pulled, and faith is torn apart. Increasingly, Christians are embarrassed to speak the truth God has spoken, and this is no small thing. Christ Himself warns, "Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

What is marriage? We do well to follow the lead of our Good Shepherd: "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let not man separate'" (Mark 10:6–9). Marriage binds a man

Marriage Talking Points

Unsure of how to start a conversation about what Lutherans believe with regard to marriage? Use these talking points!

- › As Lutherans, we believe that marriage consists of and is based on more than just feelings.
- › Marriage is a fundamental building block of society.
- › We have history on our side. For over 2,000 years, marriage has been defined as being between one man and one woman.
- › Redefining marriage is a direct and demonstrated threat to religious freedom that marginalizes those who affirm marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

to his wife and binds parents to their children. By our selfishness, we have often made a mess of things, but God's design is still good. True marriage is to be cherished and honored among us.

More than a mere moral issue, marriage gets to the heart of our faith. St. Paul compares it to Christ's sacrificial love for His bride, the Church (Eph. 5:25–26). When we confess marriage, we confess the Lord who created us male and female. When we confess marriage, we proclaim our heavenly hope, looking forward to the day when the Church, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," meets our Lord face-to-face (Rev. 21:1–2).

There has been much talk about gay pride. But really, none of us has much to brag about. We speak as fallen sinners to fallen sinners. Many Christians are understandably confused. But know that our Lord cares for you, and that His words can be trusted. When we stand up for marriage, we say to the world, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel" (Rom. 1:16). When we stand up for marriage, we take pride in the One who has always stood up for us. The world may say awful things about us, persecution may follow, but the love of Christ compels us to speak. In Him alone is healing for our fallen world. And in Him alone we stand securely as we await the wedding feast (Matt. 22:1–14).