

SEARCHING SCRIPTURE:

Words of Forgiveness and Love

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The Church has been called hateful, uncaring, un-Christian, judgmental and other more vulgar names. Christians are attacked and called names because we are part of the body of Christ. As members of this body, we stand in favor of the biblical definition of marriage: one man and one woman (Gen. 2:18, 21–24). This is quickly becoming the minority opinion both in the United States and throughout the world. Here at home, thirteen states and the District of Columbia already legally recognize same-sex unions. How does the Church respond to this? Why should the body of Christ even care?

We care because as Christians we are called to share the Good News of the atoning sacrifice of Christ for all people. Let's start with a reminder that we are all sinners who fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59), and it has since it entered into the world and removed Adam and Eve from paradise (Genesis 3). How does Scripture define sin? (Read James 4:17.)

We as a society haven't changed that much since the times of Christ. All of the sins spoken of in Scripture (adultery, homosexuality, murder, etc.) have been around since our first parents, Adam and Eve, listened to the serpent and not to their Savior. What words or phrases are used in Scripture to describe these ongoing sins? (Read Gen. 19:1–13; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26–27; 1 Cor. 6:9–10).

But what doesn't change? (Read 1 Peter 1:25.)

Sin seems to be more widely accepted by society today. Has the definition of sin changed? What's different? (Read 1 John 2:15–17; 2 Peter 2:1–3; Matt. 7:15–20; Rom. 8:5–7; Eph. 2:1–3; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9.)

The Church needs to present the truth about same-sex attraction to the world whether the world wants to listen or not. But so many Christians refuse to discuss the issue or turn up their nose in disgust that the world rejects listening to the Church's words of compassion and love. How are we expected to present what the Word of God teaches about homosexuality? (Read Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 2:24–26.)

The message of the Church toward those struggling with same-sex attraction should be the same as the message given to all sinners. Jesus Christ has come into this world to live among sinful men, die by our hands, be crushed by our sins and to redeem us all through His perfect sacrifice (Matthew 26–27; Mark 15; Luke 22–23; John 18–20). As the Church, we need to remind the world that as followers of Christ we are not anti-gay but we are anti-sin.

Loving Christians aren't those who let a man, woman or child live in a way that is sinful and harmful simply because they think they can't speak up or that they should be more tolerant because "times have changed." Loving Christians aren't people who say it's okay to do and act however you want, despite what Scripture has to say. Loving Christians don't condone a particular lifestyle or action in the name of love or understanding.

Instead, as loving Christians, we point all those we come into contact to Christ, praying for them and for us to be turned to repentance and then to the forgiveness given by God through His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Phil. 4:13).