

A FIRM FOUNDATION IN SHIFTING SAND

Quick Review

- We're in the midst of a new series:
 - "A Firm Foundation in Shifting Sand"
- I received a respectful challenge:
 - Help the next generation know...
 - What we believe,
 - Why we believe,
 - How to effectively communicate this with others who may disagree.
- While this challenge related especially to understandings of marriage and sexuality, it goes far beyond only these areas.

A FIRM FOUNDATION IN SHIFTING SAND

Quick Review

“A Firm Foundation in Shifting Sand”

- Past messages, along with PowerPoint presentations can be found on our website: www.MtVernonChristianChurch.com
 - Go to page entitled, “Listen (or Watch and Listen)”
- We will seek to focus on all three of the following, with special attention that we remember the third of these.
 - What we believe,
 - Why we believe,
 - **How to effectively communicate this with others who may disagree.**

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Definitions:

1. Bible – the sacred writings that Christians accept as the special revelation of God to humanity
2. Says – to express with words so as to communicate information, an opinion, a feeling or intention, or an instruction
3. Homosexuality – attraction to, identification with, and/or sexual behavior with those of the same sex (male with male, female with female)

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Does the Bible say anything about homosexuality?

1. Some state that the Bible says little or nothing about this.
2. Some note – accurately – that the Bible says much less about homosexuality than it does about many other matters called sin by the Bible.
3. Some state that the Bible's comments are not clear.
4. Some comment that Jesus said nothing about homosexuality.
5. As a believer and as pastor of Mt. Vernon, I'd like to say the Bible makes clear, compelling statements about this subject.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

An acknowledgment, caution, and commitment:

1. I'm aware that you can try to make the Bible say anything you want it to say.
2. Understanding and interpreting the Bible is a serious matter.
3. My desire and commitment today is to...
 - a. Seek to discern, know, and express God's heart.
 - b. Pray to receive insight (revelation) from God through his Word, the Bible.
 - c. Speak with a willingness to do whatever God says.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

A crucial statement by Jesus as a foundation for this message:

“If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.” - Jesus, in John 7:17 (NIV1984)

1. Jesus’ statement above indicates that it is possible to know if the teaching was really of God or not.
2. A person’s willingness – actually their choice – to **DO** God’s will would open up their ability to discern and understand.
3. Lack of willingness to do God’s will hinders understanding.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

This leads to an invitation as you listen today, and continue to study and learn in the days ahead:

- a. Seek to discern, know, and express God's heart.
- b. Pray to receive insight (revelation) from God through his Word, the Bible.
- c. Listen with a willingness to **do** whatever God says.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Introductory Comments – Those Who May Be Listening

1. I assume some are listening out of curiosity.
2. Others to potentially check out the theological accuracy.
3. I assume some are listening who self-identify as homosexual.
4. I assume some are listening because they passionately care about someone who is identifying with homosexuality.
5. I assume some are listening who are desperate for a clear sense of direction in his or her own life.
6. I assume there are those about to make life-shaping decisions.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Introductory Comments – Those Who May Be Listening

7. I assume there are those for whom this moment is fraught with fear, for any number or reasons. It's a fear that is so very...

- a. real
- b. deep
- c. intense
- d. unprotected

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Introductory Comments – Those Who May Be Listening

8. To those who may be listening with fear as a very real part of your experience right now, this message is from God for you:
 - a. God loves you. God cares.
 - b. I – and we – love you, too.
 - c. God has a way forward. Jesus makes it possible.
 - d. If you so desire, we will do our best to walk with you in experiencing God's love, care, and way forward.
 - e. It was for you and me Jesus came to love, forgive, renew.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Introductory Comments – Applying a Key Theme of this Series

1. God designed our sexuality...and it was very good.
2. We distorted our sexuality...and it can be very confusing.
3. God gives second chances.
 - a. God's second chances can be very good!
 - b. To benefit from the second chances God gives us we need to let go of our distortions.
 - c. We'll function best with both love and lines (boundaries).
 - d. Jesus loves us and gives us the power to live this out.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Introductory Comments – How I’m Approaching this Subject

1. I am not trying in this message to make the argument that will destroy all other arguments.
2. I’m open to follow-up conversations. Please let me know!
3. What I share, I share with conviction that it represents God’s heart and God’s word (his revelation through scripture).
4. How to share this with others is a topic for another message.
5. I am seeking to communicate “What the Bible Says...”
6. I think I’m aware of our culture’s perspective and response.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Introductory Comments – Please Take in the Entire Series!

1. This is the 7th message in a series. It's not the first; it's not the last.
2. Please hear this message within this context!
3. You can listen to the earlier messages now, or the future messages in the weeks ahead, at our web site, under the page "Listen (or Watch and Listen)"

www.MtVernonChristianChurch.com

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Introductory Comments – Please Take in the Entire Series!

1. God is the Creator of the entire universe.
2. God is the center of all. I am not, we are not, the center.
3. God created with a design in mind...and it was very good.
4. We have distorted God's design...and it's left us confused.
5. Through Jesus Christ, God offers second chances.
6. To benefit from the second chances, we need to embrace God and his design, and let go of the distortions.
7. Jesus at work in us makes it possible to live into God's design.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Introductory Comments – The Questions We Ask Matter!

1. These questions seem to be frequently asked today:
 - a. What makes each person happy?
 - b. What is fair? What are each person's rights?
 - c. Who should tell anyone else what to do with their life?
2. These are the questions I seek to have in mind today:
 - a. What is God's heart on this matter?
 - b. How can we honor God and live out his good design?
 - c. What does God say through the Bible, his inspired word?

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Introductory Comments – An Essential Biblical Foundation

1. Loving God is the first and greatest commandment.
2. Honoring God is more important than pleasing humanity.
3. The two core sins of distrust and disobedience need to be replaced with these acts of repentance: trust and obedience.
4. In God's plan, resurrection life is preceded by death.
5. These are the questions I seek to have in mind today:
6. Luke 9:23-26: *Deny self...take up cross daily...follow Jesus*
7. Foundational: Isaiah 55:8-9 – God's thoughts are way better!

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Introductory Comments – Two Confessions

1. At the end of this message today I am going to invite you to join me in a prayer of confession.
2. I also, right now at the beginning of this message, want to share another confession. For me personally, and as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, I confess that way too often I – and we as a church – have failed to offer what Jesus so clearly offered: both grace and truth, all interwoven. “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” John 1:17 (NIV1984)

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Jesus said some things that deeply relate to homosexuality.

1. Jesus identified clearly God's design for human sexuality.
 - a. Matthew 19:4-6
2. Jesus confirmed the Law and the Prophets (Old Testament)
 - a. Matthew 5:17-20 / Leviticus 18:22; 20:13
3. Jesus did not broaden the law, but focused it on the heart.
 - a. Matthew 5:21-22, 5:27-30; 5:31-32
4. Jesus taught (& modeled) the way of the cross (death to self).
 - a. Luke 9:20-25; Matthew 16:24-27; Luke 24:44-48

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Jesus said some things that deeply relate to homosexuality.

Some take-aways for me from Jesus about homosexuality.

- From the beginning God's design was for male and female to experience godly sexuality, and become one flesh.
- In confirming the Law and the Prophets, Jesus affirmed the moral law they expressed, saying this law was fulfilled in him.
- Rather than moving in the direction of everything goes, Jesus moved in the direction of a higher standard – a pure heart.
- We are called to join Jesus in dying to self on a daily basis.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Paul spoke concerning homosexuality (along with other sins).

1. Paul identified a crucial progression.

a. Romans 1:18-32

b. Suppressing truth – neither glorifying God nor giving him thanks – thinking became futile and hearts darkened – exchanging truth of God for a lie – worshiped and served the creation rather than Creator – given over to shameful lusts – exchanging natural relations for unnatural ones – given over to a depraved mind – filled with every kind of wickedness – approving of those who practice sin

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Paul spoke concerning homosexuality (along with other sins).

1. Paul identified a crucial progression.

- Homosexuality - same-gender sexual relationships – was named as a significant part of the progression of what was evil to God.
- Homosexual relations were included along with a number of other sins in a way that clearly indicated that they all were dishonoring of God and his ways.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Paul spoke concerning homosexuality (along with other sins).

1. Paul identified a crucial progression.
2. Paul identified some very interesting bed-partners.
 - a. Note the entire list of wicked behavior (Romans 1:29-32):
 - b. Wickedness, evil, greed, depravity, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slandering, God-hating, insolence, arrogance, boasting, inventing new ways of evil, disobedience to parents, senselessness, faithlessness, heartlessness, ruthlessness, approval of what is wrong

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Paul spoke concerning homosexuality (along with other sins).

1. Paul identified a crucial progression.
2. Paul identified some very interesting bed-partners.
 - Homosexuality, while clearly described, was one of many sins.
 - In this list, homosexuality is not made out as worse or better than other sins.
 - This list of sins includes things we have done!
 - We – all of us – have fallen short of God's glory. Rom. 3:23

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Paul spoke concerning homosexuality (along with other sins).

1. Paul identified a crucial progression.
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3. Paul wrote in a similar way to the church at Corinth.
 - a. I Corinthians 6:9-11 – strong warning, with another list:
 - b. Sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, slanderers, swindlers
 - c. Declaration of hope! I Cor. 6:11; II Cor. 5:17

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

The very sad story of Sodom reveals some significant insights.

1. Genesis 19:1-29 reveals a tragic story, and destruction of an entire city. The threat of homosexual rape was a main factor.
2. This story is referred to elsewhere in Scripture.
 - a. Jude 5-7 – sexual immorality and perversion
 - b. Matthew 10:14-15; 11:20-24 – more bearable on the day of judgment for Sodom than for those who disbelieved
 - c. Ezekiel 16:46-52 – The sin of Sodom: arrogant, overfed, unconcerned, did not help poor and needy; haughty, did detestable things before God

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

The very sad story of Sodom reveals some significant insights.

- Aggressive homosexual behavior was a part of the cycle of evil that pervaded this city.
- There is clear Biblical reference to this account as reflecting sexual immorality and perversion.
- In the midst of this declaration of sin, Jesus said that the disbelief of those who saw his miracles was even worse.
- Through Ezekiel, God identified the evils of Sodom. It seems homosexuality was a reflection of this great spiritual sickness.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Summary Conclusions from the Bible about Homosexuality:

1. Homosexuality – sexual relations between a man and a man or a woman and a woman – is a distortion of God’s design for human sexuality, and seen as sin – an evil before God.
 - a. It does not pass the test of meeting God’s design.
 - b. It doesn’t express one flesh made of complementary parts. (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:6-9; Eph. 5:31)
 - c. It doesn’t reflect the mystery of husband and wife expressing Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:15-33)

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Summary Conclusions from the Bible about Homosexuality:

1. Homosexuality – sexual relations between a man and a man or a woman and a woman – is a distortion of God's design for human sexuality, and seen as sin – an evil before God.
2. There is no thread or hint of approval in any of the Bible.
3. There is no hint of godliness associated with homosexuality.
4. The demand of fulfilling what pleases every person is not in keeping with the teaching of Jesus to take up our cross.
5. It is sin; it is sin like other sins: to be confessed, repented of, and forgiven, with Jesus making it possible to live a new life.

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Invitation for Confession:

1. Which of these sins do I need to confess, and receive forgiveness for?

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What the Bible Says about Homosexuality

Invitation for Confession:

1. Which of these sins do I need to confess, and receive forgiveness for?
2. How does God want to use me to express his love and his message of hope to those caught up in homosexuality?

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God's Design for Human Sexuality

The distortions to God's design for marriage and sexuality are so very many...

For every one of God's intentions,
there have been many distortions.

Yet for every distortion,
God has offered second chances.

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