

354 FF4: The mind of Christ on gay marriage?

I'm asking here that some of you consider rethinking the issue of gay marriage. Why? Because if we get this wrong it could set back the progress of the gospel massively. So I'm going to put a couple of ideas across that I hope might help the situation.

Most importantly, I'm going to ask you how you (and the church at large) are going to disagree with me and a growing section of today's church who feel that *committed* gay relationships (marriages) are not 'living in sin'. We need to apply the mind of Christ^[353] to our disagreement, so first here's my current thinking on the issue.

Sexual desire is a very powerful force, and presumably it's part of God's design because, without it, the human race would die out. So are we OK to establish that the desire itself is not evil? In the right context it can be a powerful 'cement' within a loving relationship.

As with any of God's good gifts, it's the misuse of that gift that's the problem, and we manage to invent many ways of doing that! Misusing God's good gifts is sin, right, so am I urging gay people to sin?

Last time, we noted that, by God's inspiration, Paul and others 2000 years ago wrote words that God could apply, by his Holy Spirit, to our lives in a totally different culture, climate, knowledge-base, etc. The crucial bit is deciding how to think, how to apply those scriptural principles to situations that the writers couldn't even conceive of.

The first change I made was coming to accept that some people are gay, full stop – you might disagree, mine is not to convince you. So, if someone who loves Jesus is gay, they have to decide how to deal with that sexual desire. (Not being gay, I'm nervous of what I say here.) Presumably, they might feel that God is calling them to celibacy, but what does the Bible have to say to them? If they fall in love, is there a God-honouring way for them?

The problem we have is that all the biblical references to gay sex are situations that are clearly evil, e.g. 'shameful lusts' and 'inflamed with lust for one another'; nowhere does it refer to the possibility of a committed loving gay relationship – presumably it wasn't part of people's thinking then. The moot point then is 'natural/unnatural' and what that might mean. What is 'natural' for someone who is gay?

Secondly, what are we going to do if you don't agree with my interpretation? At least three of the churches represented by my readers openly – or quietly and effectively – won't allow people in gay relationships to be involved in aspects of church leadership presumably because they are 'sinning'.

I find that difficult to square with what I quoted last time: '[Regard everybody else as superior](#)' and '[look after each other's best interests, not your own.](#)'

A difficult issue, I realise.

Paul Bev. 3.11.24