

SPECIAL INTERLUDE

Responding To the Supreme Court's Legalization Of Same-Sex Marriage (Romans 1:18-32 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The Wall Street Journal ("A More Perfect Union?", June 27-28, 2015, p. A16) claimed that the June 26, 2015 Supreme Court ruling that legalized same-sex marriage "is among the most dramatic cultural shifts in U. S. history."

It may also ominously harm religious liberty: the June 30, 2015 Republican-American lead editorial ("Little joy in consequences," p. 6A) told how some authorities were already predicting that the ruling would lead to the "deprivation of First Amendment religious-freedom rights for people who consider same-sex marriage sinful."

Conversely, William A. Galston's July 1, 2015 column of The Wall Street Journal (Ibid., "A Win on Marriage -- Now Protect Faith," p. A11) claimed the court's ruling "has no bearing -- none -- on the right of faith communities to define marriage for themselves," but the Republican-American editorial (Ibid.) noted: "The gay-rights movement has not distinguished itself as tolerant of business owners and churches that wish to abstain from any association with same-sex pairings, and the aggrieved will have no trouble finding lawyers to litigate potential landmark cases."

Also, some pro-gay parties are reinterpreting the Bible to claim God supports same-sex unions in an effort to persuade conservative Christians to change their beliefs! (carm.org, "Does Romans 1 Condemn Homosexuality?")

Need: So we ask, "In light of the Supreme Court's ruling on same-sex marriage, what does it all mean from God's perspective, what are we now to believe and do and what does the future hold for Bible-believing Christians?!"

- I. 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2 directs that since the Bible is God's inspired Word and that God will judge the living and the dead, we pastors must preach the Word of God in solemn accountability to the Lord!**
- II. Accordingly, I must proclaim to you today that Scripture at Romans 1:18-32 reveals that the Supreme Court's ruling legalizing same-sex marriage signals America is going apostate and that God is judging it:**
 - A. God's wrath is directed against men who "suppress" the truth of God in creation, Romans 1:18-20; Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, 1978, ftn. to Rom. 1:18. America's institutions, especially since the Scopes "monkey" trial, have long suppressed belief in special creation, Bolton Davidheiser, Evol. and the Christ. Faith, 1969, p. 88-105.
 - B. Romans 1:21-23 adds that man replaces God with idols, and, in America's case, these idols have included Darwin's god of evolution as the source of the universe (Ibid., p. 56-71) and materialism and pleasure-seeking.
 - C. Consequently, God gives such rebels over "in the lusts of their hearts to impurity" to dishonor their bodies in sexual immorality, Romans 1:24-25; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 443. In America's case, immorality pushed by Hollywood and the media culminated the 1960s sexual revolution in fulfillment of this prophecy.
 - D. However, God goes further to give such rebellious people over to same-sex immorality, Romans 1:26-27:
 1. The Christian Apologetics Research Ministry organization's web site claims that Romans 1:26-27 is the most hotly-contested, hard passage for same-sex groups to handle, so they try to claim that (a) Paul there condemned only homosexual acts associated with idol worship, or that (b) he condemned only homosexual acts between adults and children or that (c) he condemned "unnatural" same-sex activity, which, for a gay person would be the heterosexual union between a man and a woman, Ibid., carm.org!
 2. Yet, each of these claims are countered by the exposition of the Greek New Testament text (as follows):
 - a. First, Romans 1:26-27 is not about idolatry, for that issue is handled separately back in Romans 1:21-23.
 - b. Second, nowhere in the entire chapter does Paul refer to sexual sin in specific relationship to children.
 - c. Third, the "'unnatural'" entity in the context is **NOT heterosexuality, BUT homosexuality**: (1) The Greek text at Romans 1:26-27 does **not** use the Greek words for "woman" (*gune*) and "man" (*aner*), but "female" (*thelus*) and "male" (*arsen*). (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 167, 65-66, 361, 109) (2) Thus, the passage literally translates as follows: "(26) Because of this, God delivered them unto dishonorable passions; for even their females exchanged the natural (*phusikos*, Ibid., p. 877) sexual function (*chresis*, Ibid., p. 894) for what is unnatural, (27) and likewise also the males, leaving the natural sexual function (*phusikos* and *chresis* again, Ibid., p. 877, 894) of the female were inflamed in their lust for one another, males with males working what is shameless and receiving the due penalty of their error." (3) Thus, the natural order is heterosexuality, and same-sex unions and functions violate it!
 3. Thus, Romans 1:18-27 reveals that the Supreme Court's ruling to legalize same-sex marriage in reflection of American society signals that our nation is in apostasy, and that God is consequently judging it!
- III. Romans 1:28-32 adds that men will only increase in sin, so Scripture reveals we must do the following:**

- A. First, we must *always* believe that non-heterosexual unions and acts are *abominable sin*, Lev. 18:22; Jude 7.
 - B. Second, as 1 John 5:19 states, we must realize that Satan controls the world system, so we must heed 1 John 2:15-17 and not love this world, but love and serve God, doing His will in ministering with eternal value.
 - C. Third, we must recall that Jesus promised to build His Church so that the gates of Hades would not prevail against it, Matthew 16:18. We must thus think optimistically about God's program in relation to the Church!
 - D. Fourth, we must proclaim our Gospel of salvation to all men, including those in same-sex sin, 1 Cor. 6:9-11:
 - 1. When Paul wrote that the unrighteous would not inherit the kingdom of God, and he listed specific kinds of sinners in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, one such kind was *malakos* in the Greek text, the technical word for a "catamite," a man or a boy who effeminately lets himself be misused homosexually in the female role (Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 489-290). Another such kind is *arsenokoites*, a "sodomite" or a homosexual who expresses the male role in the relationship (Thayer, *Thayer's Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1963, p. 75).
 - 2. However, Paul added in 1 Corinthians 6:11 that though some of his readers had been such sinners, they were now washed, they were now sanctified, they were now justified by faith in Christ! Thus, our Gospel offers salvation for those in same-sex sinful unions and/or activity!
 - E. Fifth, we must relate to the lost world as God wills as described in Scripture as follows:
 - 1. As much as we can humanly do so, we must try to live at peace with all men, Romans 12:18.
 - 2. We must seek to obey all government laws to foster the reputation before the world of being law-abiding citizens, 1 Peter 2:13-17. This may involve heeding laws that unconstitutionally infringe on our rights.
 - 3. However, God calls us to heed Him over man when the two parties differ, Acts 5:27-29. When they do differ, we must respectably practice civil disobedience at any price, Hebrews 12:3-4.
 - F. Sixth, we must rely on the Holy Spirit for the will and the power to accomplish these things, Gal. 5:16-23.
- IV. In the end, Revelation 3:21 with 5:6 and 7:14b-17 predicts that as apostate oppression increases, God will meet this oppression by increasingly using godly men to shepherd the afflicted via Bible exposition, and He will give such men great influence over godless civil and religious entities for His glory.**

***Lesson and Application:* Scripture reveals that the Supreme Court's ruling that legalizes same-sex marriage signals America is in a state of apostasy, and God is giving it over to judgment! We must thus believe that non-heterosexual unions and acts are abominations, and we must not love this world's system that is under Satan's control, but live for Christ and be involved in His work of discipling men. Meanwhile, we must try to live at peace with all men, heeding all of man's laws, but we must ultimately and at all costs heed God's Word over man's laws where they differ. In the end, God promises to use apostate oppression to open doors for great nurturing ministries through Bible exposition that will eclipse godless civil and religious entities for God's glory.**

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

The day before the Supreme Court handed down its ruling on same-sex marriage, The Wall Street Journal (June, 25, 2015) ran David Howard's op-ed, "The Intrepid Missionary Elisabeth Elliot" (wsj.com/articles) about the June 15, 2015 passing of famed missionary and writer, Elisabeth Elliot. Her husband, Jim Elliot, was martyred with four other missionary men by the Auca Indians of Ecuador in January of 1956, and her subsequent writings have motivated many Christians to live godly lives and to serve the Lord on mission fields around the globe, Ibid.

A few of her sayings from those writings appeared in Mr. Howard's June 25th op-ed, and they are strikingly applicable to our message today: (1) On the subject of courtship and marriage, Elizabeth had written: "There is a dullness, monotony, sheer boredom in all of life when virginity and purity are no longer protected and prized. By trying to grab fulfillment everywhere, we find it nowhere." The vain drive by the LGBT community to acquire "fulfillment" in various aberrant unions apart from God's righteousness mirrors the sad state of which Elisabeth wrote!

(2) In application to our Biblical beliefs on marital unions in light of the court's recent ruling, this saying by Elliot in the op-ed is stunning: "There is nothing worth living for, unless it is worth dying for." (Ibid.) Indeed, we are to be committed by God's power to live for the truth on marital unions regardless of the price we might pay!

(3) In application to responding to the potentially difficult trials we face due to the court's ruling, a line by Elisabeth Elliot recorded in the op-ed is so pertinent. It reads: "The secret is Christ in me, not me in a different set of circumstances." (Ibid.) As we now face a darker, more ominous world than we faced before the Court's ruling, the secret to handling this situation is not to run away from it or to try in our own strength to change the situation, but to rely on Christ to live Himself through us to illumine the world around us of God's saving, nurturing truth.

May we then heed the Word of God and live victoriously for Christ in today's needy world!